

STARS AND STRIPES®

Travel light is byword for those on space-A flights

Page 10

Snubbed by BCS, Cal is flattened by Texas Tech

Page 40



Texas Tech quarterback Semy Cumble

A personal trainer can help your resolutions about exercising

Scene magazine

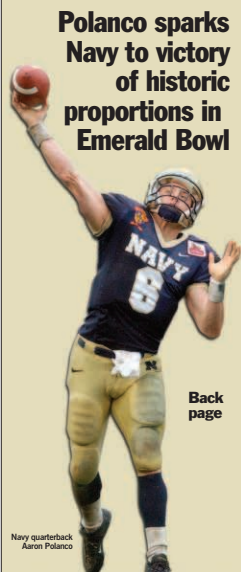
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SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2005

50¢

Troops recall 2004's memorable moments

For many, the personal events are the most important Page 8



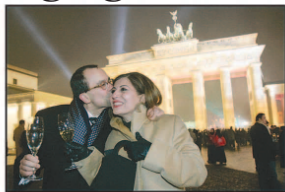
Polanco sparks Navy to victory of historic proportions in Emerald Bowl

Back page

Navy quarterback Aaron Polanco

Ring in '05

Clockwise from top: Coalition forces celebrate the new year in Afghanistan; fireworks light up the Space Needle in Seattle; lovers share a New Year's kiss in Berlin.



AP photos

- Revisit 2004 in words and pictures Pages 3-5
- 2005 welcomed around the world Page 14

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TODAY IN STRIPES

Abby, Annie's Mailbox.....	28
American Roundup	22-23
Classified	32-35
Comics	Stripes comics
Crossword	Scene
Parade	25
Horoscope	28
Letters	26
Opinion	27
Sports	35-44
TV listings	24
Weather	21
Your Money	30-31

News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Aircraft-laser probe: A laser beam was aimed at a police helicopter Friday — one of several incidents involving aircraft across the country in the past week — and federal authorities were questioning someone who had been at a house where they said the light had originated.

Officials said no one was hurt when the laser hit the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey police helicopter as it flew over an area where a similar incident occurred Wednesday.

Soon after, Port Authority officials and the FBI went to a Parsippany, N.J., home where they had tracked the laser beam and were questioning a person there in connection with both incidents, said Steve Coleman, an authority spokesman.

No charges had been filed as of late Friday night, Coleman said.

FBI whistleblower: A career FBI agent from Minneapolis who rocked official Washington with a blistering memo to the boss alleging bureau bungling before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks has retired from the agency.

Coleen Rowley, who was named one of Time magazine's Persons of the Year for 2002 for her whistleblowing efforts, retired Friday, 11 days after turning 50 — when she became eligible for a full pension, the Star Tribune reported.

Rowley, who worked for the FBI for 24 years, said she has no immediate plans, but wants to be considered for appointment to a new federal board that will ensure counterterrorism investigations and arrests do not interfere on people's rights.

Anna Nicole's millions: Anna Nicole Smith's lawyer vowed to ask a federal appeals court to reconsider after it ruled that the former Playboy model turned reality TV star is not entitled to \$85.5 million from her late husband, an oil tycoon who married her when he was nearly 90.

Howard K. Stern said Thursday he would ask the full appeals court to rehear the case and would appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court if necessary.

Smith, who first gained fame as Playboy's 1993 Playmate of the Year, was 26 when she and oilman J. Howard Marshall II married in 1994. He was 89. They had met three years earlier when she was working as a stripper.

Marshall died in 1995, and Smith and Marshall's son, E. Pierce Marshall, have battled over his estate ever since.

World

Sudan's civil war: Sudan's government signed a preliminary peace deal Friday with rebels from the country's south, ending one step closer to a comprehensive accord to end Africa's longest running civil war.

But the continuing violence in the western region of Darfur cast a shadow over celebrations.

Delegates from the warring sides initiated the two final chapters of an eight-part pact that spell out a power-sharing agreement and a permanent cease-fire.

The agreement, three years in the mak-



Political controversy in Pakistan: Protesters hold a banner that reads "Black Day against pro-U.S. policies and western agenda" on Saturday in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Secular and religious groups held nationwide protest rallies to condemn the decision by President Gen. Pervez Musharraf to retain the powerful post of army chief. Despite hundreds of people participating in in Karachi and other major cities, the demonstrations did not attract the thousands of protesters that organizers had hoped for, and none of the country's top opposition leaders attended.

ing, gives the southern rebels seats in the government, and guarantees them a stream of revenue from the country's oil wealth to spur development. It also integrates the militaries, and grants the southern region a chance to opt for self-determination after six years.

A final peace accord is set for Jan. 9 in Nairobi, Kenya, where rebel leader John Garang and Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha will sign all eight parts of the peace deal.

Ukraine election turmoil: Viktor Yanukovich vowed to fight on for Ukraine's presidency, despite handing the opposition of this ex-Soviet Republic a begrudging victory by announcing his resignation as prime minister.

His opponent, Western-leaning opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko, soundly won last weekend's court-ordered presidential revote, but Yanukovich has refused to concede, vowing to challenge the results in the Supreme Court. Under Ukrainian election law, Yushchenko cannot be declared president until all appeals against the voting are exhausted.

The pro-Russian Yanukovich announced his resignation as prime minister on Friday in a televised address, his first significant concession since losing Sunday's vote, but said he will maintain his claim to the presidency.

China after SARS: China's tourism industry rebounded strongly in the wake of SARS last year, with a nearly 20 percent increase in foreign arrivals and a 50 percent surge in revenues, the government said Saturday.

Some 99 million foreign tourists arrived in China between January and November

last year, a 19.6 percent rise from the same period a year earlier, the official Xinhua News Agency reported, citing China's National Tourism Administration.

The report said that arrivals in the first 11 months of 2004 also exceeded the arrivals for all of 2002, but no figure was provided.

Civil war in Uganda: Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on Saturday said the army will resume all-out war on rebels in northern Uganda, charging that the insurgents rejected a cease-fire deal that had been expected to open the way for political talks on ending the 18-year civil war.

The government, however, will continue negotiating with the rebels in an effort to find a political solution to the conflict in which thousands have been killed and more than a million forced from their homes, Museveni said during New Year's celebrations.

The Lord's Resistance Army rebels have waged a campaign of murder, rape and abductions in northern Uganda. Led by the elusive Joseph Kony, they replenish their ranks by abducting children and forcing them to become fighters, porters or concubines.

Taiwan independence: Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian described rival China's plans for an anti-secession law as a threat to regional security in his New Year message Saturday.

China's parliament, the National People's Congress, will discuss plans for the law at its full session convening on March 5. Beijing says the law is aimed at pushing Taiwan to unite with the mainland.

Stories and photo from wire services

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NEW YORK — A month-by-month chronology of notable news in 2004, including the AP's Top Ten stories of the year (noted below), AP's list was compiled in mid-December, before the deadly tsunami in Asia.

January

- Jan. 1 — The first commercial flight between India and Pakistan in two years arrives in New Delhi, India.
- Jan. 3 — NASA's Mars rover, Spirit, touches down on Mars; a Flash Airlines charter jet full of French tourists returning home from Egyptian vacations crashes into the Red Sea, killing all 148 people aboard.
- Jan. 4 — Georgians overwhelmingly elect Mikhail Saakashvili as president, two months after he led protests that forced Eduard Shevardnadze to step down.
- Jan. 5 — China confirms its first SARS case since an outbreak of the disease was contained in July 2003 and orders the slaughter of some 10,000 civet cats and related species.
- Jan. 8 — A U.S. Black Hawk Medevac helicopter crashes near Fallujah, Iraq, killing all nine soldiers aboard; Libya agrees to compensate family members of victims of a 1989 bombing of a French UTA passenger plane over the Niger desert that killed 170 people.
- Jan. 14 — Libya has ratified the nuclear test ban treaty, a Vienna-based U.N. agency announces.
- Jan. 17 — A roadside bomb north of Baghdad kills three U.S. soldiers and two Iraqi civil defense troops, raising the U.S. death toll since the beginning of military operations in Iraq to 500.
- Jan. 18 — Iraq was AP's No. 2 story of the year. Throughout 2004, Iraq was a striking mix of bloody turmoil and tantalizing promise. Anti-American insurgents wreaked havoc with car bombings and videotaped beatings of hostages, the death toll for U.S. military forces passed 1,200, and the toll of Iraqi civilians was many times higher. Yet Iraq's interim leaders doggedly proceeded with plans for national elections early in the new year.
- Jan. 18 — A suicide truck bombing outside the headquarters of the U.S.-led coalition in Baghdad kills at least 31 people and injures more than 60 in the deadliest attack in the Iraqi capital since Saddam Hussein's capture in December.
- Jan. 24 — NASA's Opportunity rover lands on Mars, arriving at the Red Planet exactly three weeks after its identical twin landed.
- Jan. 25 — Mikhail Saakashvili is inaugurated as Georgia's president.
- Jan. 28 — A judge orders British Prime Minister Tony Blair's administration of any direct involvement in Iraq of a government expert on Iraqi weapons.

February

- Feb. 1 — Twin suicide bombers kill 109 people at two Kurdish party offices in Irbil, Iraq; a stampede during a storming ritual at the annual Muslim pilgrimage in Mina, Saudi Arabia, kills at least 251 worshippers.
- Feb. 2 — Israel kills the leader of Islamic Jihad and three other militants in a Gaza raid; an 11-story apartment building collapses in Konya, Turkey, killing 90 people.
- Feb. 5 — Pakistan's president pardons the country's top nuclear scientist for leaking weapons technology to Iraq, Libya and North Korea.
- Feb. 6 — An explosion rips through a Moscow subway car during rush hour, killing 41 people and wounding more than 100.
- Feb. 7 — Sri Lanka's President Chandrika Kumaratunga dissolves Parliament and calls April 2 elections, more than three years ahead of schedule.
- Feb. 8 — Anti-government rebels take control of at least nine towns in western Iraq as the death toll in the violent uprising rises to at least 40.
- Feb. 10 — A truck bomb outside a police station in Iskandariyah, Iraq, kills 53 people; an Iranian plane crashes in the United Arab Emirates, killing at least 43 people.
- Feb. 11 — A car bomb at an army recruiting center in Baghdad kills 47.
- Feb. 12 — In an open challenge to California law, San Francisco authorities perform ceremonies of same-sex weddings and issue a pack of marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples.
- Gay marriage was AP's No. 6 story of the year. From coast to coast, gay marriage was a volatile topic. Massachusetts became the first state to have legal, same-sex weddings, and local officials in several places

— including San Francisco and Portland, Ore. — also wed gay and lesbian couples before courts intervened. However, each time the issue reached the ballot — in 13 states in all — voters decisively approved constitutional amendments banning gay marriage.

- Feb. 15 — A shopping mall fire kills at least 83 people in northeastern China.
- Feb. 22 — Rebels capture Haiti's second-largest city, claiming CAP-Haiti as their biggest prize in a two-week uprising that has driven government forces from half the country.
- Feb. 23 — The Palestinians open their case against Israel's West Bank barrier in the world court.
- Feb. 24 — Russian President Vladimir Putin dismisses his prime minister and all other Cabinet ministers in preparation for March's presidential vote; a 6.5-magnitude earthquake devastates an isolated region of northern Morocco, killing more than 560 people.
- Feb. 26 — Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski is killed in a plane crash in southern Bosnia.
- Feb. 29 — Haiti's President Jean-Bertrand Aristide resigns and goes into exile in the Central African Republic.



Rescue workers line up bodies beside a bomb-damaged passenger train at Atotcha station following a number of explosions on trains in Madrid on March 11. The toll from the bombings was 190 dead and more than 1,400 injured.

March

- March 1 — Rebels roll into Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, and are met by hundreds of residents cheering the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.
- March 2 — A series of coordinated blasts kills 181 people at shrines in Karachi and Baghdad as thousands of Shiite Muslim pilgrims gather for a religious festival.
- March 4 — Moulin el Mottasaddi, a Moroccan and the only person in the world convicted in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, wins a retrial in a German appeals court; Horst Koehler, head of the International Monetary Fund, announces his resignation to become a candidate for the German presidency.
- March 5 — Martha Stewart, the American celebrity housewife, is convicted of obstructing justice and lying to the government about a stock sale.
- March 7 — Fourteen Palestinians are killed in the deadliest Israeli raid in Gaza in 17 months.
- March 8 — Iraq's Governing Council signs a landmark interim constitution.
- March 9 — Gerard Latour, a former U.N. official, becomes Haiti's interim prime minister.
- March 11 — Ten bombs explode in quick succession across the commuter rail network in Madrid, Spain, killing 190 people and wounding more than 1,400.
- The Madrid bombings were AP's No. 10 story of the year. Soon after the attack, which was blamed on Islamic militants, angry voters ousted Spain's pro-American conservative government in favor of the Socialist Party, which promptly withdrew Spanish troops from Iraq.
- March 12 — South Korea's parliament impeaches President Roh Moo-hyun on charges of illegal electioneering and incompetence, stripping him of his constitutional powers.
- March 14 — The opposition Socialists score a dramatic upset win in Spain's general election, unseating conservatives slung by charges they provoked the Madrid terror bombings by supporting the U.S.-led war in Iraq and making Spain a target for al-Qaida; Russian President Vladimir Putin wins a second term.
- March 15 — Former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide returns to the Caribbean from African exile after winning temporary asylum in Jamaica; a drive-by shooting in Mosul, Iraq, kills four American and Iraqi missionaries.
- March 16 — China declares victory in its fight against bird flu, saying it has "stamped out" all its known cases, while a factory worker in Thailand becomes Asia's 23rd victim of the virus.
- March 17 — Haiti's new U.S.-backed Cabinet takes office without a single member of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's party.
- March 18 — NATO sends U.S. and Italian reinforcements to Kosovo after fighting between Serbs and ethnic Albanians kills 22 people and wounds hundreds — the worst violence since the province's war five years ago.
- March 19 — A judge in Spain jails the main suspect in the Madrid bombings and four alleged accomplices on terrorism charges.
- March 20 — Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian narrowly wins re-election.
- March 20 — The U.S. military charges six soldiers with abusing inmates at Abu Ghraib prison on the western outskirts of Baghdad.
- The Abu Ghraib scandal, in which photographs came to light showing U.S. military guards at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad forcing naked Iraqi detainees to pose in humiliating positions, was AP's No. 4 story of the year. Prosecutions ensued, and the scandal fueled anti-American sentiment in the Muslim world.
- March 22 — Israel kills Hamas founder Ahmed Yassin in a helicopter missile strike outside a Gaza City mosque; incumbent Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is sworn in as Malaysia's prime minister after a landslide election victory.
- March 24 — The European Union slaps Microsoft with a \$6.1-billion fine for exercising a monopoly with its Windows software and orders sanctions that go well beyond a U.S. antitrust settlement.
- March 25 — Rebels seize the main opposition party pull out of Ivory Coast's power-sharing government after 25 people die in deadly clashes between security forces and opposition supporters.
- March 31 — The world court rules that the United States has violated the rights of 51 Mexicans on death row to receive diplomatic help, and orders Washington to review their cases.

YEAR, FROM PAGE 3

April

April 2 — Seven Eastern European countries — Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Latvia and Estonia — join NATO in the expansion of the alliance in its 55-year history; the political alliance led by President Chendricka Kucera wins the largest number of seats in Sri Lanka's parliamentary elections; the U.N. Security Council throws its weight behind talks aimed at halting a year-old conflict in western Sudan, calling on the government and opposition groups to halt fighting for humanitarian reasons and to settle their dispute politically. The conflict in the Darfur region has driven hundreds of thousands of people from their homes in a campaign one U.N. official says is "ethnic cleansing."

April 3 — Surrounded by police, three suspects in the Madrid railway bombings blow themselves up in a building outside Madrid, killing one special forces soldier and wounding 11 police officers.

April 4 — The American military death toll in Iraq rises to at least 610.

April 5 — Flash floods kill at least 34 in northern Mexico; Sri Lanka's prime minister approves veteran politician Mahinda Rajapaksa as prime minister.

April 6 — China issues a major ruling on how Hong Kong chooses its leaders, saying the territory must submit proposed political reforms to Beijing for approval. Jordan's military court convicts eight Muslim militants and sentences them to death for the 2002 killing of a U.S. aid official in a terror conspiracy linked to al-Qaida; lawmakers cut Lithuania's scandal-ridden president Rolandas Paksas for abuse of office, ending the country's worst political crisis since it gained independence from Moscow.

April 7 — The only Sept. 11, 2001, suspect ever convicted is freed after a Hamburg, Germany, court rules that the evidence is too weak to hold him pending a retrial.

April 8 — Iraqi insurgents seize a dozen foreign hostages in Iraq, threatening to burn three Japanese captives alive if Japan does not withdraw its troops.

April 9 — About 40 foreign hostages from 12 countries are being held by Iraqi insurgents, a coalition spokesman reports.

April 14 — President Bush endorses Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to pull out of Gaza and parts of the West Bank as "historic and courageous actions"; the Italian government confirms the execution of an Italian hostage by its Iraqi abductors; two more Japanese are abducted in Iraq.

April 15 — Iraqi militants free three Japanese hostages after holding them about a week.

April 17 — Israeli assassinate Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantzi in a missile strike on his car; Iraqi insurgents free two Japanese hostages abducted on April 14.

April 19 — Spain's Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero orders a withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq, killing a campaign pledge to try to calm his uneasy coalition over claims that killed 190 people in Madrid.

April 19 — A Russian rocket roars into space carrying an American, a Russian and a Dutch man to the international space station for the third mission since the NASA launch of the U.S. shuttle program.

April 20 — The hubble telescope sends a \$750 million satellite controlled by the Eisenhower administration to test two of Albert Einstein's fundamental predictions about the universe.

April 21 — Five suicide attackers detonate car bombs against police buildings in Basra, Iraq, killing 74 people and wounding 60; a Guatemalan man, described by U.S. authorities as Central America's most-wanted drug smuggler, is killed in Madrid; the U.S. State Department says the third mission since the NASA launch of the U.S. shuttle program.

April 24 — Suicide bomb attacks against Iraqi oil facilities in the Persian Gulf, killing three Americans and disabling Iraq's biggest terminal for more than 24 hours.

April 26 — Mainland China rules Hong Kong will have direct elections for its next leader, and for all its lawmakers; in 2008, U.S. soldiers roll into a base in the Shiite holy city of Najaf to replace withdrawing Spanish troops; a Jordanian militant with links to al-Qaida claims responsibility for the April 24 suicide bomb attacks against Persian Gulf oil terminals.

April 28 — A Moroccan soldier is caught in connection with the Madrid train bombings in Iraq is indicted in Madrid, Spain, on charges of helping plan the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks; the U.S. State Department acquires nine Monrovia oil tankers to the U.S. Embassy in Rome, protesting the oil embargo.

April 30 — Ten countries — Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Cyprus and Malta — join the European Union in a historic enlargement; a U.S. federal appeals court rules that retired astronaut John Demjanjuk was a Nazi guard, and is not eligible to obtain U.S. citizenship.

May

May 2 — Martin Torrijos, the son of a former dictator, wins Panama's first presidential vote since the handover of the Panama Canal in December 1999; Jordan's Prime Minister Zaid al-Rikabi declares that his government is paralyzed by unpopularity, and is succeeded by former finance minister Mubarak Bekka.

May 3 — Picasso's 1905 painting "Boy with a Pipe" sells for \$104 million at Sotheby's in New York, breaking the record for an auctioned painting.

May 6 — Asian Abkhazians, hardline leader of Georgia's renegade Abkhazian republic, fires anti-aircraft missiles at the airport to blow up bridges connecting the region with the rest of Georgia; Libyan court sentences six Bulgarian migrants to death on charges that they intentionally infected more than 400 children with the AIDS virus; militants from a predominantly Christian tribe kill at least 500 people in two attacks on a Muslim town in central Nigeria.

May 7 — A federal judge dismisses nearly half the U.S. government's case against Pavlo Lazarenko, a former Ukrainian prime minister charged with embezzling \$100 million from his country.

May 12 — A U.S. military spokesman says that the U.S. government is engaged in a photographic mission and painting at naked Iraq prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison, is charged by the military with assaulting the detainees; a U.S. military spokesman says that the U.S. government is engaged in an Army Reserve military police unit to be piped in the scandal.

May 13 — Insurgents burn oil to pipeline in southern Iraq, setting off a fire that will last for days; daily Iraq oil exports by about 25 percent, or 450,000 barrels per day.

May 14 — A bomb destroys the VIP section at a stadium during a Victory Day parade in the Chechen capital of Grozny, killing 24 people, including the province's president Ahmad Kadyrov.

May 17 — Muslim mobs attack Christians in the streets of Kano, Nigeria, as security forces struggle to quell a two-day rampage to avenge a massacre of hundreds of Nigerian Muslims.



Gay couple Stuart Gaffney, left, and John Lewis protest in front of the California Supreme Court on April 12 in San Francisco. The debate over whether same-sex couples are entitled to the right to marry was a volatile topic throughout the year. However, each time the issue reached a ballot — in 13 states in all — voters decisively rejected constitutional amendments banning gay marriage.

May 13 — Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee resigns after his governing coalition loses Parliament elections, after nearly six years in power; Libya announces its decision to halt military trade with North Korea, Syria and Iran.

May 14 — A South Korean court reinstates impeached President Roh Moo-hyun; London's Daily Mirror newspaper apologizes for publishing faked photographs of abducted U.S. Westerners by British forces in Iraq; the steps down.

May 16 — The United States announces a new initiative to speed up the approval process for new combination AIDS drugs that will bring cheap, easy-to-use treatment to millions of people in Africa and the Caribbean.

May 17 — Abdel-Zalman Othman, also known as Izzadin Saleem, the head of the Iraqi Governing Council, is killed in a suicide car bombing in Baghdad.

May 19 — Mamnoon Singh, a 71-year-old technocrat, is named India's next prime minister by the president.

May 23 — A river ferry carrying about 250 passengers capsizes during a storm in eastern Bangladesh, killing at least 74 people; the vaulted out of new terminal at Forti's Charles de Gaulle airport comes crashing down, killing four people; Horst Koehler, a former head of the International Monetary Fund, is elected Germany's ninth postwar president.

May 24 — Flooding of rain-swollen rivers in the Dominican Republic and Haiti kills more than 1,400 people.

May 25 — Sudan's government and rebels sign key agreements, resolving the last remaining issues needed to end Africa's longest-running war.

May 27 — Abu Hamza al-Masri, a Muslim cleric whose neo-shiite London mosque attracted 32,000 U.S. and 11 suspected Zacarias Moussawi and the shoe bomber Richard Reid, is arrested in London on charges of trying to build a terrorist training camp in Oregon.

May 28 — Qatari Ambassador to the United States (Yad Alawi) as prime minister of the country's interior government.

May 29 — The U.S. State Department says that al-Qaida militants at an expatriate housing complex in Khartoum, Saudi Arabia's oil hub, kill 22 people, mostly foreign oil industry workers.

May 30 — Qatari Ambassador to the United States (Yad Alawi) as prime minister of the country's interior government.

May 31 — Former President President Jean-Bertrand Aristide leaves Kingston, Jamaica, for South Africa, saying it will be his "temporary home" until he can return to Haiti.

June

June 1 — Ghazi Masha'al al-Awair, a powerful Sunni Muslim tribal leader and critic of the U.S.-led war on terrorism, is named president of Iraq's incoming government.

June 2 — Three foreign aid workers and two Afghans are shot and killed in an ambush in northern Afghanistan in an attack claimed by resurgent Taliban militants.

June 3 — CIA Director George Tenet resigns after a controversy over intelligence lapses about suspected weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

June 4 — Former President Ronald Reagan, whose struggle with Alzheimer's disease had kept him out of the public eye for a decade, dies at 93. Reagan's death was AP's No. 8 story of the year. Americans responded with an outpouring of affection and respect for their 40th president. His state funeral in Washington brought the country together at least briefly in a year otherwise marked by bitter partisan divisions.

June 5 — A U.S. military spokesman says that the U.S. government is engaged in a photographic mission and painting at naked Iraq prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison, is charged by the military with assaulting the detainees; a U.S. military spokesman says that the U.S. government is engaged in an Army Reserve military police unit to be piped in the scandal.

June 6 — Insurgents burn oil to pipeline in southern Iraq, setting off a fire that will last for days; daily Iraq oil exports by about 25 percent, or 450,000 barrels per day.

June 6 — An Irish in Myanmar working for the British Broadcasting Corp. is killed in an shooting in Ceylon, Saudi Arabia.

June 8 — An American who worked for a U.S. defense contractor is shot and killed in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; the second deadly shooting of a Westerner in the kingdom in three days.

June 10 — Continent-wide, four-day voting for the European Parliament begins with some 14,870 candidates at 25 national runoffs for 732 seats.

June 14 — A car bomb explodes during rush hour on a busy street in Baghdad, killing 12 people — five of them foreigners working to rebuild Iraq's power plant.

June 15 — Israel's attorney general drops a corruption case against Ariel Sharon, ending months of uncertainty over the prime minister's political future and boosting chances for an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip; U.S. explorations up through two pipelines in southern Iraq, cutting off exports from the south; by the time that the pipelines are up and running.

June 16 — The independent commission investigating the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks says no evidence exists that al-Qaida had strong ties to Saddam Hussein.

The release of the commission's report was AP's No. 5 story of the year. After painstaking research and dramatic public hearings, the commission formed to investigate the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, issued its report. It concluded that America's leaders failed to grasp the gravity of terrorist threats before Sept. 11 and recommended creation of a national intelligence directorate to oversee civilian and military intelligence agencies.

June 17 — A car bomb explodes outside the Iraqi oil defense intelligence center, killing at least 25 people and wounding 130.

June 18 — An al-Qaida group says it killed American hostage Paul M. Johnson Jr., and posts photos on the Internet showing his body and severed head, a rocket plane and a severed head. The group also announced that it had named named man, then glides back to Earth on an unpowered landing.

June 21 — Iran seizes three British military patrol boats in the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, Iraq's main link with the Gulf, and detains eight armed crewmen for entering Iranian territorial waters.

June 26 — Taliban fighters kill up to 16 men after learning that they have registered for Afghanistan's U.S.-backed national elections, the deadliest attack yet in a campaign aimed at subverting the nation's first free vote.

June 27 — Boris Yeltsin is elected president of Russia, replacing Vladimir Putin, who was elected president of Russia in the 2000 presidential election.

June 28 — The U.S.-led invasion restores sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government; Canada's Liberal Party loses its control of Parliament, but wins the largest share of seats to lead the country's first minority government in 25 years.

June 30 — A U.N. helicopter crashes in Sierra Leone, killing all 24 peacekeepers, aid workers and others on board.

June 30 — The Iraqi take legal custody of Saddam Hussein and 11 of his top lieutenants. The first step toward the ouster of Saddam's expected trial for crimes against humanity, after nearly seven years of travel, the international Cassin spacecraft enters orbit around Saturn.

July

July 1 — Saddam Hussein scoffs in Iraq court at charges of war crimes and mass killings, making a defiant first public appearance since being hauled down seven months ago.

July 2 — Iraq's Iraqis are charged with the deaths of two American hostages who reportedly responded to stop working with the U.S. military in Iraq to win their release.

July 4 — A 20-ton slab of granite is laid at the World Trade Center site as the cornerstone of the skyscraper that will replace the destroyed towers; saboteurs blast a strategic crude oil pipeline that runs from Iraq's northern oil fields to the Persian Gulf.

July 7 — A Yemeni suicide court charges six Yemenis in the planning of the October 2000 bombing of the USS Cole.

July 9 — A U.S. federal appeals court in New York City rules that the United States in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, is released; a Swedish appeals court throws out a life sentence for the convicted kidnaper of a Danish minister.

July 10 — The U.S. State Department says that the U.S. government is engaged in a photographic mission and painting at naked Iraq prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison, is charged by the military with assaulting the detainees; a U.S. military spokesman says that the U.S. government is engaged in an Army Reserve military police unit to be piped in the scandal.

July 11 — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's Cabinet resigns and the longtime leader appoints a relative outside, Ahmed Nazif, as prime minister, further consolidating his power; the highest U.N. court rules that Israel's planned 425-mile-long barrier in the West Bank violates international law and urges the United Nations to take action to stop its construction.

July 12 — France and Iraq restore diplomatic relations that were severed 13 years ago during the Gulf War.

July 13 — A disabled militant who is billed as a close confidant to Osama bin Laden sues under a Saudi amnesty offer, the most important figure to turn himself in so far.

July 14 — A suicide attacker detonates a massive car bomb at a checkpoint in Baghdad, killing 11 people and wounding 40.

July 16 — American domestic entrepreneur Marianne Stewart is head of a prison term for a crime she committed in 1997, a crime she committed by a U.S. District Court for lying about a stock sale.

July 19 — A 182-carat diamond that a young miner dug up in southeast Guinea is sold for \$10 million to a U.S. jeweler; the results of a Guinean Central Bank.

July 20 — A Filipino truck driver is freed by Iraqi insurgents a day after the Philippines releases a Filipino soldier held by the U.S. military.

July 21 — A U.S. federal appeals court in New York City rules that the United States in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, is released; a Swedish appeals court throws out a life sentence for the convicted kidnaper of a Danish minister.

July 22 — A high-speed passenger train derails in southwestern Turkey, killing 37 people and injuring 81.

July 23 — Militants in Iraq force an Egyptian diplomatic hostage and demand his country's release any plans it has to send security experts to Iraq.

July 24 — Lance Armstrong wins a record sixth Tour de France; Pakistan arrests Ahmed Khalifa Ghailani, a Tanzanian al-Qaida suspect wanted by the United States in the 1998 bombings at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

July 26 — Mohammed Mandooh Helmi Quib, an Egyptian diplomat held hostage by militants in Iraq for three days, is released after successful negotiations.

July 27 — Four French detainees held by U.S. authorities for more than two years at Guantanamo Bay return home — the first French nationals to be released from the detention facility since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

July 28 — A car bomb explodes outside a police station used as a recruiting center in Baquba, Iraq, killing 70 Iraqis and wounding more than 90.

EU nations set to face growing pains in 2005

British election, Ukraine, dollar are key issues

BY ROBERT BARR
The Associated Press

LONDON — The Iraq war didn't hurt George W. Bush's re-election chances in 2004, and it's unlikely to rebound against British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2005. Blair, who has suffered a fall in opinion poll ratings and a rift with key European allies over his strong support for the war, is nonetheless likely to benefit from feeble domestic opposition if, as expected, he calls a national election in May.

If Blair wins, that would reinforce continuity in the key governments in the European Union: Blair took office in 1997, Jacques Chirac was elected president of France in 1995, and Gerhard Schroeder has headed Germany's government since 1998.

Elections, in a sense, are passing events in the bigger story of Europe's glacially paced evolution into a bigger and possibly more cohesive entity.

There are several key markers due next year in that process, and continuing uncertainty about how Europe may be deflected by the continuing fallout of the collapse of the Cold War order.

The election with the biggest effect on Europe next may prove to be the last one of this year — Ukraine's drawn-out and divi-

sive presidential balloting. Kremlin favorite Viktor Yanukovich won a November vote, but that was annulled after allegations of massive fraud and the Dec. 26 rerun was won by Western-leaning reformer Viktor Yushchenko, according to preliminary results.

But Yanukovich didn't immediately refuse to concede and the tensions could provoke a long crisis that some fear might turn violent. If fighting were to break out, the countries along Ukraine's western border that became EU members this year would be the obvious destination for refugees.

The messy elections in Ukraine complicated the EU's relations with Russia, which regards Ukraine — once part of the Soviet Union — as within its sphere of influence. Russian President Vladimir Putin strongly backed Yanukovich.

The EU isn't finished expanding, though its future growth is likely to be more cautious and difficult.

Romania and Bulgaria won qualified membership cards at the end of the year. Both were given entry dates in 2007 which were not guaranteed — both have work to do to meet certain conditions.

Both countries joined NATO in March, along with Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia.



British Prime Minister Tony Blair jumps from a tank during a December visit with British troops in Basra, Iraq. In the year ahead, Blair is unlikely to be upset if a national election is called despite a fall in opinion poll ratings due to his strong support for the Iraq war.

The EU said Bulgaria has to improve its justice and law enforcement systems and fight harder against corruption and organized crime.

In addition to upgrading its legal system, Romania was told it must eliminate some state aid programs to industry, especially the steel sector, and improve environmental protection.

Those conditions will be especially noted in Turkey, which hopes to open membership negotiations next year. Turkey's application has been particularly troubling, with some EU leaders wary of embracing a Muslim majority state.

For all the members of the European Union, expansion has changed the playing field. Industries are likely to be tempted to shift production to the newer members to benefit from lower wage levels.

New members will find their infrastructures, in many cases, an impediment to growth; old members will have to deal with the dislocation of their work force.

Europe also has what has become a chronic money problem — a strong currency.

The collapse in the value of the dollar, which set a string of new lows against the euro at the end of 2004, effectively chokes off European markets in the United States, while making American goods cheaper and more competitive in European markets.

There's no obvious European solution to a problem rooted in burgeoning budget and trade deficits in the United States. Until Washington is moved to act, Europe will have to sweat it out.

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A disfigured musical genius haunts the catacombs beneath the Paris Opera, waging a reign of terror over its occupants. When he falls fatally in love with the lovely Christine, the Phantom devotes himself to creating a new star for the Opera, exerting a strange sense of control over the young soprano as he nurtures her extraordinary talents. He's smitten and wants Christine for his own, but Christine meets up with her childhood acquaintance Raoul and the two fall in love. Feeling betrayed, the Phantom decides to kidnap her and imprison her with him in his lair. Raoul is now the only one who can stop him.

PG-13 Parents Strongly Cautioned Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13



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The PHANTOM of the OPERA

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Bamberg	21-27 Jan
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Bitburg	18-24 Feb
Camp Deha	4-10 Feb
Darmstadt	11-17 Feb
Dexheim	28 Jan-3 Feb
Friedberg	25 Feb-3 Mar
Giebelstadt	11-17 Feb
Grafenwohl	21-27 Jan
Hanau	14-20 Jan
Heidelberg	21-27 Jan
Hohenfels	28 Jan-3 Feb
Iltsheim	11-17 Feb
Katterbach	4-10 Feb
Kitzingen	4-10 Feb
Kosovo	28 Feb-3 Mar
Lakenheath	21-27 Jan
Livorno	4-10 Mar
Manheim	20-26 Jan
Mildenhall	14-20 Jan
Ramstein Hercules	28 Jan-3 Feb
Ramstein Hightangle	21-27 Jan
Rhein Main	4-10 Feb
Schweinfurt	28 Jan-3 Feb
Spangdahlem	11-17 Feb
Teitz	11-17 Mar
Vaihingen	28 Jan-3 Feb
Vicenza	25 Feb-3 Mar
Vilseck	14-20 Jan
Vogelweh	14-20 Jan
Wiesbaden	21-27 Jan
Wuerzburg	14-20 Jan



Showtimes are subject to change. Please check your local theater or aafes.com to verify show dates.



YEAR, FROM PAGE 4

August

Aug. 1 — A supermarket fire on the outskirts of Asunción, Paraguay, kills more than 400 people.

Aug. 3 — The Statue of Liberty pedestal in New York City responds to the public for the first time since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Pakistan announces arrests of two Qaeda terrorists, one with a multimillion-dollar U.S. bounty on his head.

Aug. 5 — Two-year-old twins from the Philippines born with the tops of their heads fused together are separated at Montefiore Medical Center in New York City.

Aug. 9 — Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols is sentenced to life without the possibility of parole for his role in the worst act of domestic terrorism in U.S. history.

Aug. 10 — The retreat of Mouiri el Motassadeh, the only Sept. 11, 2001, terror suspect ever convicted, opens in Hamburg, Germany.

Aug. 12 — New Jersey Gov. James E. McGreevey announces his resignation, acknowledging that he had an extramarital affair with a woman.

Aug. 13 — Hutu marauders raid a U.N. refugee camp in western Burundi, shooting and hacking at least 163 Congolese Tutsi to death.

Aug. 15 — Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez survives a referendum to oust him. Hurricane Charley leaves 31 people dead in Florida and causes \$7.4 billion in insured damage.

Aug. 22 — American thieves steal the Edward Munch masterpiece "The Scream" and a second Munch painting, "Madonna," from the Munch museum in Oslo, Norway.

Aug. 24 — Uzbekistan's Supreme Court sentences 15 al-Qaida-linked Islamic militants to as long as 18 years in prison for a series of bombings in the country that killed at least 47 people in March and April. Two Russian airlines crash almost simultaneously after taking off from the same Moscow airport, killing a total of 90 people.

Aug. 28 — Islamic militants claiming to be holding two French journalists give France 48 hours to overturn the law that bans the wearing of Islamic headscarves in schools.

Aug. 29 — Kremlin-favored candidate Alikhanov wins Chechnya's presidential election, succeeding Ahmad Kadyrov who was assassinated.

Aug. 31 — Former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic opens his long-delayed defense in the second half of his U.N. war crimes trial in the Hague, Netherlands. Palestinian suicide bombers blow up two buses almost simultaneously in BeerSheva, Israel, killing at least 16 passengers and wounding more than 80.

September

Sept. 1 — A band of terrorists, believed led by a Chechen warrior, takes more than 1,000 people hostage at a Russian school. The seizure was AP's No. 9 story of the year. When the seizure ended on Sept. 3, about 800 captives and guards were freed, but more than 330 hostages had been killed and more than 400 children.

Sept. 1 — Militants in Iraq fire seven炮弹 of a Kuwaiti tanking firm, which is linked to Iraq. Korea, Japan and the U.S. demand an apology.

Sept. 6 — Former U.S. President Bill Clinton undergoes successful heart bypass surgery at a New York City hospital.

Sept. 7 — Israeli helicopter attacks a Hamas training field in Gaza City, killing at least 14 militants and wounding 30. U.S. military field in the camp campaign last month. Hurricane Frances kills 23 in Florida and causes \$4.1 billion in insured damage.

Sept. 8 — The Genesis space capsule, which has orbited the sun for more than three years, crashes to Earth after its parachute fails to deploy.

Sept. 9 — Hurricane Ivan gummies Grenada, Barbados, other Caribbean islands, and southern United States. storm is blamed for 121 deaths.

Sept. 14 — Guerrillas bomb a Baghdad shopping street full of police recruits, killing at least 59 people.

Sept. 15 — Three Americans are held by a former Green Beret who boasted he had helped U.S. troops fight in Vietnam. He is charged with plotting a school hostage-taking and other attacks that have claimed more than 400 lives.

Sept. 19 — Former Chinese President Jiang Zemin turns over his last major post as chairman of the commission that runs China's military, to his successor Hu Jintao, completing the country's first peaceful leadership transition since its 1949 revolution; militants decapitate three hostages believed to be Iraq Kurds in a videotape that surfaces hours after Iraq's prime minister says Iranian elections will be held on schedule.

Sept. 20 — A videotape of a man who said he was the purported beheading of a man identified as American construction contractor Eugene Armstrong.

Sept. 21 — Tropical Storm Sierrita leaves nearly more than 1,800 people dead and nearly 900,000 homeless in the Caribbean.

Sept. 21 — Hundreds of Syrian soldiers stationed near Lebanon's capital begin dismantling their bases in an effort to appease a U.N. Security Council decision.

Sept. 25 — The four major hurricanes that devastated Florida and other southern states were AP's No. 3 story of the year. The hurricanes were Frances, Ivan and Jeanne. Ivan killed 10 people and destroyed 2,500 homes and caused more than \$22 billion in insured losses. Not since 1988 had so many hurricanes in one season.

Sept. 26 — The death toll from the 2004 hurricane and tropical storm season was more than 2,000. Hurricane Charley (United States 31), Cuba 4, Jamaica 1, Dominican Republic 1, Haiti 1, and the U.S. Virgin Islands 1.

Sept. 26 — Hurricane Ivan (United States 82, Barbados 2, Cayman Islands 2, Dominican Republic 4, Grenada 39, Haiti 3, Jamaica 1, Trinidad and Tobago 1, and the U.S. Virgin Islands 1).

Sept. 26 — Pakistan forces kill a suspected top al-Qaida operative wanted for his role in the 2004 bombings in London. The U.S. State Department reports Daniel Pearl, a month of U.S. airstrikes on rebel-held Faluqah has killed more than 100 suspected insurgents. U.S. military officials announce.

Sept. 26 — Two hijackers and two Iraq aid workers kidnapped in Iraq are freed three days later in captivity.

Sept. 29 — A Saudi suspected of being an associate of Osama bin Laden and his 15 co-militants are sentenced to death by firing squad for the bombing of the USS Cole four years ago, the first convictions in the al-Qaida terror attacks since Sept. 17, 2001.

Sept. 30 — A string of bombs kills 35 children and wounds scores of others in Baghdad at a government-sponsored celebration to inaugurate a new sewage plant.

October

Oct. 1 — U.S. and Iraqi forces launch a major assault to regain control of the insurgent stronghold of Samarra, killing more than 96 insurgents.

Oct. 4 — U.S. and British forces kill Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden was the 2004 Nobel Prize in physiology, or medicine.



Jack McAllister salvages items from what was a bathroom in his mobile home in the Windmill Village park in Punta Gorda, Fla., on Aug. 17. A record four hurricanes battered the Sunshine State during a span of six weeks, killing more than 100 people and causing \$442 million in damage.

Oct. 5 — Americans David J. Gross, H. David Polter and Frank Wilczek win the 2004 Nobel Prize in physics.

Oct. 6 — Israelis Aaron Ginzivman and Avner Hershko, and American Irvin Rose win the 2004 Nobel Prize in chemistry.

Oct. 9 — Israel's first direct presidential election begins.

Oct. 10 — A videotape of the beheading of British hostage Kenneth Bigley appears on an Islamic Web site.

Oct. 11 — Shiite militia fighters start turning in weapons in Baghdad's Sadr City under a deal seen as a key step toward ending weeks of fighting with U.S. and Iraqi forces in the Shiite militant stronghold; the European Union sends at least 34 people on Oct. 7, at least 78 Muslim detainees and others are crushed to death in southern Thailand after the police round up 1,300 people and pack them into trucks following a riot; Israel gives Yasser Arafat a brief, briefly leaves a compound to reopen the Israeli parliament in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Oct. 23 — A 6.8-magnitude earthquake in northern Japan kills 39 people and drives some 100,000 from their homes; insurgents waylay three missionaries carrying U.S.-trained Iraqi soldiers and messengers about 500 ft.

Oct. 25 — Egypt arrests eight Embryones and accuses them of plotting the nearly simultaneous car bombings of a hotel and tourist camp in the Sinai that killed 29 people.

Oct. 26 — The decapitated body of a Japanese backpacker is found crushed to death in southern Thailand after the police round up 1,300 people and pack them into trucks following a riot; Israel gives Yasser Arafat a brief, briefly leaves a compound to reopen the Israeli parliament in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Oct. 28 — A video on a militant Islamic Web site says a Japanese man is to be beheaded unless Japan pulls troops from Iraq; the Israeli parliament approves Ariel Sharon's withdrawal plan from Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank.

Oct. 27 — New York City's subway makes 100th anniversary.

Oct. 28 — Scientists report in the journal Nature that they have found the skeleton of a new human species in Indonesia; insurgents execute 11 Iraqi soldiers and declare on an Islamic militant Web site that Iraq fighters will "avenge" the blood of women and children killed in U.S. strikes on the guerrilla stronghold of Fallujah.

Oct. 29 — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is flown to Paris for medical treatment, breaking free from nearly three years of Israeli-imposed confinement at his compound in the West Bank town of Ramallah; Osama bin Laden, reading a statement to the American people in a new videotape, directly admits for the first time that he ordered the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Oct. 30 — The decapitated body of a Japanese backpacker is found wrapped in an American flag in northeastern Baghdad. The militant group led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi later claims responsibility.

November

Nov. 2 — Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh is slain in Amsterdam, Netherlands, after receiving death threats over a movie he made criticizing the treatment of women in Islam.

Nov. 2 — President Bush wins a second term, defeating Democrat John Kerry. The U.S. presidential election was AP's No. 1 story of the year. Bush's victory over Kerry, John Edwards and Ralph Abner, Democratic finalists, Kerry seemed to have a strong chance of ousting Bush. But the Massachusetts senator struggled to explain his stance on Iraq, undermined the sting of negative ads and in the end, narrowly lost the pivotal swing state of Ohio after a campaign in which Bush, over and over, insisted he was best qualified to be commander in chief at a time of complex challenges to national security.

Nov. 3 — Hamid Karzai is officially declared the winner of Afghanistan's first-ever presidential election.

Nov. 4 — Ivory Coast warplanes bomb the largest city of the rebel-held north, breaking a more than year-old cease-fire in the civil war that split the country.

Nov. 5 — Russian President Vladimir Putin signs a bill confirming the country's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

Nov. 6 — France and the U.S. overrule a vetoing military force to put down an explosion of anti-French violence in Ivory Coast, its former West African colony.

Nov. 8 — Thousands of U.S. troops attack the toughest strongholds of Sunni insurgents in Fallujah, Iraq. U.S. soldiers are eliminated from the city.

Nov. 11 — Lithuania becomes the first country in the 25-member European Union to ratify the EU constitution.

Nov. 11 — Yasser Arafat, revered as the champion of Palestinian statehood and reviled as a terrorist, dies at a French military hospital

outside Paris. Arafat's death was AP's No. 7 story of the year. For three decades, Arafat was a hero to most of his fellow Palestinians but considered untrustworthy — or worse — by leaders in the West and Israel. His death, at age 75, triggered emotional mourning among Palestinians but also sparked hopes of a breakthrough in efforts to end their long, bloody conflict with Israel.

Nov. 14 — Iran notifies the U.N. nuclear watchdog in writing that it will suspend uranium enrichment and related activities to dispel suspicions that it is trying to build nuclear arms.

Nov. 16 — Margaret Hassan, an aid worker kidnapped after decades of helping Israelis, is believed murdered after Al-Jazeera television shows a video of a woman's slaying.

Nov. 21 — Iraqi authorities set Jan. 30 as the date for the nation's first elections since the collapse of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship.

Nov. 22 — Three U.N. workers kidnapped in Afghanistan four weeks ago are released unharmed.

Nov. 23 — Opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko declares himself the winner of Ukraine's disputed presidential election and takes a symbolic oath of office.

Nov. 24 — Ukraine's election officials declare that the Kremlin-backed prime minister Viktor Yanukovich has won Ukraine's bitterly disputed presidential runoff of balloting. Thousands of opposition supporters demonstrate in Kiev.

Nov. 27 — After 40 years in North Korea and less than one month in a U.S. military jail near Tokyo, U.S. Army deserter Charles Jenkins becomes a free man; the number of corpses found in and around Mosul, Iraq, reaches 11.

Nov. 28 — Eleven have been identified as members of the Iraqi security forces, who have been targeted by insurgents.

Nov. 29 — Iraq's most feared terror group claims responsibility for slaughter-then members of the Iraqi security forces in Mosul, where dozens of bodies have been found; just a day before an international deadline, Iraq agrees not to test any centrifuges as part of a total suspension of nuclear activities.

December

Dec. 2 — The European Union begins its biggest-ever military operation, formally taking over NATO's peacekeeping mission in Bosnia with 7,000 troops.

Dec. 3 — Insurgents launch two major attacks against a Shiite mosque and a police station in Baghdad, killing 30 people, including at least 16 police officers; Ukraine's Supreme Court declares the results of the country's disputed presidential runoff election invalid and rules that the runoff should be repeated on Dec. 26; back-to-back storms in the Philippines that began Nov. 29 kill at least 568 people and leave hundreds missing.

Dec. 7 — Hamas leader is sworn in as Afghanistan's first popularly elected president.

Dec. 8 — U.S. Congress approves the historic overhaul of spy agencies in response to the 9/11 commission's recommendations.

Dec. 11 — Doctors in Austria determine that Ukrainian presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko was poisoned with dioxin, which caused the severe disfigurement and partial paralysis of his face; Myanmar's ruling military junta announces that more than 5,000 prisoners will be freed from various prisons, the third such release in less than a month.

Dec. 15 — American telecommunications giants Sprint Corp. and Nextel Communications Inc. announce they will merge in a \$35 billion deal that would create the nation's largest wireless provider.

Dec. 16 — A U.S. federal judge orders the U.S. government to pay \$22 million to settle U.S. military's fraud charges involving the company's America Online unit.

Dec. 22 — A suicide bomber attacks a crowded mass tent at a U.S. base near Mosul, Iraq, killing 22 people, most Americans.

Dec. 26 — The world's most powerful earthquake in 40 years rocks northern Indonesia and Sunda Islands, killing more than 100,000 people.

Dec. 27 — Opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko declares victory in Ukraine's fiercely contested presidential election.

Dec. 29 — The World Health Organization warns that disease in the aftermath of the tsunami catastrophe could kill many people as the deadly waves and earthquake, Susan Sontag, a leading intellectual and activist of the past half century who introduced the concept of "camp" to mainstream culture and influenced the way many people saw the world through the photographs she took at age 71; actor Jerry Orbach, who played a sardonic, semi-albino cop on TV's "Law & Order" and scored on Broadway as a song-and-dance man, dies of prostate cancer at age 69.

Dec. 29 — The first Indonesian military teams reach the devastated west coast of Sumatra island, finding thousands of bodies. Sri Lanka says it was possible to prevent the tsunami outbreaks. Death toll is reported at more than 117,000 and climbing.

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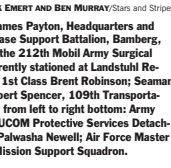
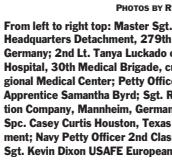
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PHOTOS BY RICK EMERT AND BEN MURRAY/Stars and Stripes

From left to right top: Master Sgt. James Payton, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 279th Base Support Battalion, Bamberg, Germany; 2nd Lt. Tanya Luckado of the 212th Mobil Army Surgical Hospital, 30th Medical Brigade, currently stationed at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center; Petty Officer 1st Class Brent Robinson; Seaman Apprentice Samantha Byrd; Sgt. Robert Spencer, 109th Transportation Company, Mannheim, Germany; from left to right bottom: Army Spc. Casey Curtis Houston, Texas EUCOM Protective Services Detachment; Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Palwasha Newell; Air Force Master Sgt. Kevin Dixon USAF European Mission Support Squadron.

2004 remembered for personal battles

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER

Stars and Stripes

This was the year President Bush won re-election, the Boston Red Sox broke the curse, Republican icon Ronald Reagan died and U.S. forces battled a bloody insurgency in Iraq.

But for troops across Europe, any one of those headline-grabbing events took a distant second to more personal moments. A difficult deployment, an emotional homecoming, the painful loss of close friends and a miraculous survival of a bomb attack are just some of the events servicemembers remember most from 2004.

Staff Sgt. Adam Hart said he will never forget the day the Humvee he was riding in was rocked by a roadside bomb attack in Iraq. On Dec. 23, the explosion shot a large piece of shrapnel, hitting Hart in the back of the neck, grazing his spine and lodging itself in his throat.

Doctors saved Hart's life, and he now has the shard of triangular metal that nearly killed him. But the architect from Shreveport, La., said, from Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany where he was being treated, that the attack and his extraordinary survival is not nearly as memorable as the bond he formed with the group of soldiers he served beside.

"That will stick out forever.

"Those guys have become a second family to me," said Hart, who has since flown to the States while his comrades are still in Iraq.

Soldiers in some military units weren't as lucky as Hart.

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Four, which is based in Port Hueneme, Calif., but has Seabees deployed throughout Europe and Iraq, lost two of its own this year.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Kerrick Adams died unexpectedly in October. The assistant crew leader broke his leg while deployed to Dukati, Albania, working on a school renovation project. He went into cardiac arrest two days after surgery and died. In September, a mortar attack killed Petty Officer 2nd Class Eric Knott, a steelworker with the battalion, while working in Fallujah.

"That was the most shocking thing to us," Petty Officer 2nd Class Palwasha Newell said from Rota, Spain. "These are the people you know and stuff and you're thinking, 'We're all in this, nothing is going to happen to us.'"

But once they died, it was shocking. Still I



Left: Staff Sgt. Adam Hart, a National Guardsman from the 256th Brigade Combat Team shows the shard of metal removed from his neck last week.

BEN MURRAY
Stars and Stripes

Right: John and Jessica Arquette and their two children pose in Mannheim, Germany. The family celebrated the end of his yearlong Iraq deployment in February, but he'll be returning this year.

JESSICA INIGO
Stars and Stripes

can't believe it. Whenever I look at their picture, 'I'm like, no, they're not dead.'"

For many servicemembers and their families, deployments and the war in Iraq dominated their lives in 2004.

Air Force Master Sgt. Kevin Dixon of Buffalo and U.S. Air Forces Europe's European Mission Support Squadron in Stuttgart, Germany, served three months downrange before returning to his family earlier this year.

"It was just stressful not knowing if you were going to wake up," Dixon said. "When I came back it felt good to be back on German soil. I went home to the States the next day and it felt even better to be on U.S. soil."

For Sgt. Robert Spencer, October 2004 marked the end of his deployment to Kuwait.

"It was great to get back to my family and to have my family here with me in Germany," said Spencer, from the 109th Transportation Company in Mannheim. He was delivering mail to Bamberg's Warner Barracks last week.

"It was the high point of the year. Even while I was deployed, it was awesome to get all the letters and videotapes from my family. It was a great year overall, nothing bad happened to me," he said.

Master Sgt. James Payton of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 279th Base Support Battalion in Bamberg, said he was thankful for the people he worked with throughout 2004. However, Payton said the deployment of 1st Infantry Division soldiers from Bamberg put a damper on the year.

"With them being gone, there is an emptiness of brotherhood within the community that is very noticeable," he said.

Some servicemembers marked the year with personal achievement.

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Four surprised Petty Officer 1st Class Brent Robinson in Rota by naming him its combat coordinator, a position responsible for training Seabees in combat and survival skills. He helped the unit revamp its program and rewrote its instructions.

The program proved its worth in November and may have saved lives. After a Marine unit got into a firefight in Iraq, a Navy Seabee with the group used the communications skills he learned in the program to instinctively call in a medical evacuation over the radio.

"It's really a mission-critical position, and I really didn't expect it to come my way and I was handed selected for it," Robinson said. "It was an honor."

For servicemembers like Seaman Apprentice Samantha Byrd joining the military in 2004 was the biggest change in their life and the most memorable moment. Byrd, 20, of Hayward, Calif., worked in retail and was going to college before she decided to join the Navy. In June, she went to boot camp. She's now deployed with the Seabees in Rota.

"A lot of people that I met and the experience I've had are just incredible to me and I

still have four more years ahead of me, so I'm really excited to see where that's going to take me," she said.

With 2004 behind them, some servicemembers are looking ahead to next year. Army Sgt. John Arquette, the operations sergeant with the 51st Transportation Company in Mannheim, Germany, and his family celebrated the end of a yearlong deployment to Iraq in February. But he already is making plans to go back. His unit returns early this year.

"I don't know about other families, but our family only seems to have grown stronger after the deployment," said the soldier during a ceremony on Sullivan Barracks Wednesday to send his unit back. "It gives us something to build on and let us know that we can do this. It's going to be so much easier the second time around."

His wife, Jennifer, said the upcoming deployment is bringing the family back around full circle with a homecoming at the beginning of the year and a deployment at the end. Now she said she's prepared to be a single mother again and raise their two children while her husband is gone.

"It's not too bad," she said. "Plus, next time it should be much easier. I definitely wouldn't say it's a piece of cake, but it is doable."

Reporters Charlie Coon from Stuttgart, Rick Emert from Bamberg, Jessica Inigo from Darmstadt and Ben Murray from Darmstadt, all in Germany, contributed to this story.
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Budget cuts could hit Raptor production

BY RENAE MERLE
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is considering cutting some of its largest programs, including the F/A-22 Raptor, to help bring down the budget deficit during the next few years and offset war costs, according to congressional and industry sources.

The proposals are considered tentative and have not been approved by the Office of Management and Budget or Congress, where they could face substantial resistance. The Pentagon is not scheduled to release its fiscal 2006 budget proposal until February.

The proposal also is expected to include significant cuts to the Navy's shipbuilding budget. "No service is getting away scot-free," said a Senate aide, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the process is in its early stages.

The cuts would confirm Wall Street and industry concerns that the Pentagon's hefty budget eventually would have to be tem-

pered to offset the cost of the war and the budget deficit. In an interview last week, James Albaugh, president of Boeing Co.'s defense unit, said budget pressure was the chief obstacle facing the industry next year.

"The big programs are all going to be looked at, just because of their size," Albaugh said.

Defense Department spokesman Eric Ruff said nothing is final until the budget is submitted and that the 2006 budget is likely to include an overall increase. "Throughout this budget process we have focused on military capabilities: agility, speed, precision and flexibility," Ruff said.

The Navy's budget proposal already includes several program reductions, including building only four ships in fiscal 2006, compared with nine planned for the current fiscal year, and delaying production of a new generation of destroyers, defense and industry sources have said.

Under the current proposal, Lockheed

Martin Corp.'s F/A-22 would remain fully funded through 2008 with the company building 24 to 26 of the planes a year, according to the sources. But funding for the program could stop or dwindle after 2008, the sources said. The cuts could mean Lockheed would produce 160 to 170 of the aircraft instead of the 277 the Air Force currently projects, the sources said. The future of the program could depend on the Quadrennial Defense Review the Pentagon is conducting to assess what it will need to fight the wars of the future.

"While we have not been notified of any changes to the F/A-22 program, if in fact these cuts do occur, they would not take place for several years and we believe the aircraft will prove its value and we would hope to see the number of aircraft restored," said Dennis R. Box, a Lockheed spokesman.

Any cuts to the Raptor are expected to be resisted by supporters in Congress, who have fought off previous attempts to cut back or cancel the program.



LOCKHEED MARTIN/AP

The F/A-22 Raptor could be a casualty of Defense Department budget cuts, according to congressional and industry sources. However, the Pentagon will not release its budget plans until February.

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Report: AF Academy investigator knew of allegations early on

The Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — A top Air Force attorney was quickly notified 2½ years ago about a letter alleging that rape were going unpunished at the Air Force Academy, but she later told investigators she learned of the letter more than a year later, according to a published report.

General Counsel Mary Walker, the Air Force's top civilian lawyer, was briefed via e-mail days after an anonymous June 28, 2002, letter alleged the academy was discounting rape reports and blaming female cadets for being attacked. (The Colorado Springs Gazette reported Friday, citing newly obtained documents.

But Walker told Pentagon investigators she knew nothing of the letter until fall 2003 — months after the scandal went public, a new report says.

"I think this certainly raises a lot of concerns about how truthful she's been with members of Congress and members of the Fowler Commission," said Sen. Wayne Allard, the Colorado Republican who led efforts to uncover the scandal.

"I think it would be a good idea to put her under oath and get her to testify," Allard said.

Walker did not respond to a request for comment from the newspaper and an Air Force spokesman did not immediately return a message Friday.

A congressional panel led by former Rep. Tillie Fowler was critical of a report by a group led by Walker. Fowler said the group tried to "shield Air Force headquarters from public criticism" by downplaying leadership failures.

In contrast, the Defense Department's inspector general recently exonerated Walker and 20 others.

Allard is seeking hearings on the differences before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The anonymous June 2002 letter emerged along with other documents this week in the inspector general's report.

The letter, addressed to then-Air Force Secretary James Roche, Chief of Staff John Jumper and others, said female cadets "are being raped and sexually harassed by male cadets and academy officials refuse to prosecute the male rapists."

The newspaper said that it obtained records showing Walker's deputy, William Atlee, told her of the letter in a July 3, 2002, e-mail. "Sounds horrible. Keep me advised," Walker responded.

The two exchanged five e-mails that day labeled "new academy allegations," and over the next two months they traded numerous messages titled "academy report," "academy matter" and "recent events at USAFA."

The messages were censored by Air Force officials before being released, the newspaper said.

The Pentagon report cites Walker's Jan. 22 testimony to investigators in which she said she "didn't know anything" about the letter until a Sept. 30, 2003, hearing.

"All of a sudden, somebody produced it," Walker testified, "and I said, 'Oh, my God.' ... I had never seen that letter before. ... I looked at it and I went, 'What the heck is that?'"

Walker's investigation concluded there was "no systemic acceptance of sexual assault (or) institutional avoidance of responsibility."

Air Force Secretary James Roche, who ordered Walker to investigate the scandal, said Wednesday he didn't know of the letter until late 2003.

Pack light for space-A flights

By CHARLIE COON

Stars and Stripes

Military travelers in Europe using space-available flights should pack light or risk having to jettison stuff at the airport to meet weight limits, according to troops who work at the terminals.

And while much of the traffic lately has been holiday-related, people who are changing duty stations also were warned not to carry too much onto the plane.

"If you need two people to pick up your bag, it's too heavy," said Master Sgt. Gregory Theroux of the 723rd Air Mobility Squadron at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Theroux estimated that 700 or more U.S.-bound passengers flying space-A passed through Ramstein in recent days. Baggage problems, he said, are a daily problem.

Whether on official or space-A status, passengers can check in

Military travelers asked to be aware of baggage restrictions

just two pieces of baggage, which cannot exceed 70 pounds each. If those limitations aren't met, the bag will be counted as two pieces. Items exceeding 100 pounds will not be accepted and must be moved as freight.

Getting around by space-A, Theroux said, isn't much different from flying commercial. If a bag is too big to be allowed onto a commercial flight, such as a connecting flight within the United States, chances are it's too big to fly space-A.

Flight availability also is like commercial flying, he said, in that chances of getting a seat are better for travelers going against the flow of traffic than in the same direction as everyone else at the same time.

Rhein-Main Air Base in Frankfurt, Germany, is a major hub for space-A travel.

"The main [problem] I see is clothes," said Tech. Sgt. Jason Eighmey of the 726th Air Mobility Squadron at Rhein-Main. "How can you have over 70 pounds of clothes, I don't know."

Persons changing duty stations sometimes make the mistake of assuming their 350-pound limit placed on work-related items translates into 350 pounds they can bring onto the plane.

"Most of the people who happen to fly through [Ramstein] are on official travel," Theroux said. "They're taking their normal baggage, and were told they could also ship equipment and supplies with them."

"Sometimes that is misinterpreted."

Larger items such as office equipment, Theroux said, normally have to be shipped as freight.

There are certain exceptions. B4 duffel and sea bags are allowed as one piece regardless of size, provided they don't weigh more than 100 pounds. That policy also applies to large garment bags, golf clubs, snow skis, bicycles, fishing equipment, rucksacks and musical instruments.

Travelers are advised to phone the terminal if they have questions on what they can take, as well as for updates on the status of space-A flights.

Additional information is available at: <http://public.af.mil/Library/SPACEA/General>.

Reporter Vince Little in Yokota Air Base, Japan, contributed to this report.

E-mail Charlie Coon at: coonc@mail.strips.osd.mil

SATO raising fee for tickets

By RICK EMERT

Stars and Stripes

The ticket processing fee American airline travelers pay to SATO will increase as early as February.

The \$15 fee charged by SATO on each airline ticket — there is no added fee for rail or bus travel — was imposed in October to recover the 5 percent to 10 percent commission travel agencies earned, which most airlines have eliminated, said Thomas Kraus, operations manager for Navigator SATO Travel.

In the United States, many airlines had eliminated the commission to travel agents for airfare by November 2001, according to information posted on the Web site of the National Commission to Ensure Consumer Information and Choice in the Airline Industry. The commission was created by the Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century and enacted in April 2000.

The SATO fee currently is \$15 per ticket, not to exceed \$50 for tickets for a family, Kraus said. If a family of five purchases airline tickets, the processing fee still is only \$50.

However, the fee does not recover the amount of the commission that travel agents received in the past, Kraus said. A \$500 plane ticket to the States would have earned SATO a commission of \$25 to \$45.

Kraus said that SATO is working with the U.S. military in Europe to determine how much the fee will increase in February or March. He could not estimate how much it would increase, he said, adding that German travel agencies charge an average of 30 euros for domestic and European flights, and 45 euros for intercontinental flights.

The elimination of the travel agent commission likely is the result of a struggling airline industry, Kraus said.

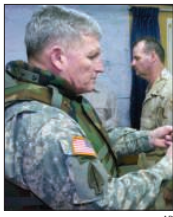
"It's hard to imagine why airlines would cut the commissions, but some airlines were struggling before [Sept. 11, 2001]," Kraus said. "Since 9/11, business is even worse for some airlines."

The fee has not caused major problems for SATO, whose agents inform their customers of the fee, rather than adding it to the total cost of the ticket, Kraus said.

In Bamberg, Germany, SATO travel agent Solveit Eelz said airline ticket sales haven't changed since SATO began charging the fee.

"We explain to the customers why we charge the fee," she said. "People don't complain about it, and we are not selling less tickets because of it."

E-mail Rick Emert at: emert@mail.strips.osd.mil



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker is wearing the digital camouflage test uniform.

Schoomaker wears flag patch different for new test uniform

By LISA BURGESS

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — When Gen. Peter Schoomaker visited troops in Iraq last week, an alert reader noticed he was wearing sleeve patches the opposite of how they were told to put them on.

The Army chief of staff had his U.S. flag patch above his combat patch, contrary to Army regula-

tions.

The reader sent an e-mail to Stars and Stripes: Had Army regulations changed?

No, said Army spokesman Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty. Schoomaker is wearing the digital camouflage test uniform.

In February, Schoomaker directed soldiers to wear the flag patch on the right shoulder of their battle dress uniform, or BDU — sewn below the combat

patch, if they had one, so soldiers didn't have to rip a patch off and re-sew it on, only lower.

The new BDUs have Velcro fields on both arms to eliminate the sewing of rank and patches.

The regulations governing the wearing of those BDUs, including the mandatory adoption phase-in date for the entire Army, "will be released within the next several weeks," Hilferty wrote.

E-mail Lisa Burgess at: burgessl@strips.osd.mil

GI convicted in child porn case

A U.S. soldier in Kosovo was convicted of possession of child pornography during a general court-martial on Dec. 14. Army officials reported last week.

Spc. Anthony C. Haddock of Troop F, 4th Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, serving at Camp Bondsteel, originally was charged with distribution of child pornography, as well, but the charges were reduced as part of his plea agreement, an Army spokesman said.

Haddock was sentenced to a reduction of rank to E-1, 16 months of confinement and a bad conduct discharge.

Wiesbaden memorial

A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday for a Rheinblick Golf Course employee at the Süd-Friedhof in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Robert James Templeton, who died Saturday after being in a coma for nearly a year, died of heart failure at the Horst Schmidt Clinic in Wiesbaden.

The former maintenance worker was a Navy veteran and golf course employee for 13 years. He is survived by his wife, Jutta.

Call DSN 338-7738 or civilian 0611-380-7738 for more information on the service.

From staff reports

Frosty the Patrolman



BRADLEY RHEN/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Soldiers from Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment put the finishing touches on a snowman Wednesday at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E, Afghanistan, after a foot of snow fell on the base over the previous 36 hours.

Allawi warns neighbors to halt insurgents

Iraq's patience running out, he tells Syria, Iran

BY BASSEM MROUE

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — At least three roadside bombs targeted Iraqi security troops Saturday, a day after Prime Minister Ayad Allawi warned Iraq's neighbors to crack down on insurgents infiltrating from their territory, saying that Iraq's patience was wearing thin.

Al-Qaida, meanwhile, claimed responsibility for a bold attack on U.S. troops. Iraqi officials repeatedly have accused Syria and Iran of supporting the insurgents, waging a campaign of violence against American forces and Allawi's U.S.-backed government. Both countries have denied helping militants or allowing them to cross their borders into Iraq.

But Allawi's comments Friday



Iraq's interim prime minister, Ayad Allawi, delivered an unusually strong warning to border nations to crack down on insurgents infiltrating from their territory.

to Baghdad's Al-Iraqiya television were among his toughest yet. "Some countries are hosting people who are involved in harming the Iraqi people," he said, without

naming any nations. "Harming Iraq and its people is not allowed."

He said his government had contacted the countries and was waiting for their reply. "According to the answers we will decide what the next step will be," he said.

"Iraq is not a weak country. Iraq is passing through a difficult period but Iraq can respond in a strong way if needed," he said. "Patience has limits and it is beginning to run out."

In new violence, a U.S. Marine assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action Friday during security operations in the Al Anbar Province, the Marines said in a statement, which did not provide any other details.

A roadside bomb explosion struck an Iraqi National Guard patrol south of Mahmudiya, a town about 25 miles south of Baghdad. It left one guard dead and six wounded, an ING officer said Saturday.

Another bomb went off while a U.S. military convoy was driving through southern Baghdad's Dora district on Saturday, witnesses

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Friday, at least 1,328 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

At least 1,042 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The figures include three military civilians. The department did not provide an update Friday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when Pres-

ident Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,190 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count.

That includes at least 933 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers as of Thursday.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department:

■ Army Pfc. Oscar Sanchez, 19, Modesto, Calif.; died Wednesday in Mosul, Iraq, when an explosive struck his observation post, assigned to 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team), Fort Lewis, Wash.

said. The blast damaged nearby shops, but apparently caused no casualties.

In the town of Yousifiya, just south of Baghdad, another bomb exploded early Saturday, wounding two guardsmen who were on patrol, police said.

In Baghdad's western neighborhood of Adl, police found two be-headed bodies on a main street Saturday, witnesses said. Police said they couldn't identify the victims.

Iraqi forces on Friday discovered and cleared four improvised explosive devices and five weapons caches and detained 122 suspected insurgents, the U.S. military said Saturday. The sweep appeared to be the latest in a series of anti-insurgency operations in

the so-called Sunni Triangle in central Iraq.

Al-Qaida in Iraq, led by the country's most wanted terrorist, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, claimed responsibility for a well-coordinated attack Wednesday on a U.S. post in the northern city of Mosul. The U.S. military said one American soldier and 25 insurgents were killed in the battle.

The militants, however, claimed they had suffered no casualties.

"We, al-Qaida in Iraq, claim responsibility for the battles of Mosul, may God cleanse it from the impurities of the past," said a statement posted on a Web site that often carries militant claims.

Afghans arrest suspect in August car bombing

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Security forces have arrested the suspected organizer of the deadly car bombing of a U.S. security firm in the Afghan capital and believe he was acting on the orders of al-Qaida, an Afghan official said Saturday.

The man, a Tajik national called Mohammed Haider, confessed his leading role in the Aug. 29 car-bomb attack, which killed about 10 people, including three Americans, Afghan state television reported.

A spokesman for the Afghan intelligence service, Mohammed Nader, said the report was accurate but declined to discuss the details.

Haider also admitted organizing a suicide attack on a Kabul shopping street on Oct. 23, which killed an American woman and an Afghan child, the TV report said. The attack was allegedly carried out by a Kashmiri militant.

American military officials say al-Qaida cells could still be operating in several Afghan cities, three years after U.S. forces entered Afghanistan to pursue members of Osama bin Laden's organization in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

U.S. and Afghan forces killed nine people and detained at least 18 others in a monthlong sweep against al-Qaida suspects late last year, and one American general has suggested the Kabul car bomb was the work of a militant group with links to the radical Islamic network. It was unclear when Haider, a bearded man of 30 shown briefly during the evening news, was detained.

The report said Haider told investigators that he had traveled to the Pakistani city of Peshawar to meet an alleged al-Qaida member called Attallah who gave him the instructions to carry out the attack.

Attallah supposedly paid Haider \$7,000 to buy a car and explosives, the report said.

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Punk rockers ring in new year in Iraq

BY NICK WADHAM
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Two years ago, Saddam Hussein could not have imagined in his wildest nightmares that on New Year's Eve 2004 he would be sitting in a jail cell and a punk band known as albums titled "Hitler Bad, Vandals Good" and "Look What I Almost Stepped In" would be playing in the heart of his former empire.

But so it was that the Army's 1st Cavalry Division, 3rd Brigade, got a one-hour show by Southern California punk pennials The Vandals, who de-lighted a small mosh pit in the Green Zone with favorites including "Oi to the World" and "Anarchy Burger," the ditty that earned them brief worldwide fame (and \$22,000) when it was quoted in the 2002 Vin Diesel movie "XXX."

The show was one of the few entertainments provided for U.S. troops in Iraq on New Year's Eve, a day marked chiefly by a relative lull in violence. There were no fireworks, though a few offices on bases were still spruced up with holiday decorations. A nighttime curfew kept Iraqis off the street and Baghdad echoed mostly with the sound of helicopters running frequent patrols over downtown.

"It's pretty cool to be asked to come out and go right in the middle of it — it's like we stepped inside our television," Vandals bassist Joe Escalante, wearing the flak jacket he borrowed from the Army for the tour, said before the show.

While many soldiers sat in the dusty, darkened theater staring in bemusement as The Vandals played their extremely loud set, a handful of die-hards reverted to their happier American ways and jostled each other in true slam style in the impromptu mosh pit.

"This is straight up one of the few times I get to go out and beat people up, but it's a friendly atmosphere so we're not getting beat up too bad," said Pfc. Russell Holt, 20, a medic from Tampa, Florida. "These guys are up there with Superchunk."

The Vandals, who gained popularity in the 1990s for blending a sharp sense of humor with their punk riffs, mixed it up with a few three-chord ditties, speed versions of Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now" and "Summer Nights" from the musical Grease, and the theme song of "Team America: World Police," "America, (Exple-

tive) Yeah!"

The set earned the praise of Matthew Linus Byars, a 31-year-old medic from Nashville, Tenn., and self-proclaimed punk rocker for 18 years. He stomped through the mosh pit and stood before lead Vandals singer Dave Quackenbush, bobbing his head in rapture.

"There aren't many real punk rockers in the Army," Byars said.

"I just kind of blew off Christmas as another day of work but this was really special to me," he said. "It was one of those if I'm on duty I'll trade anybody to be here this afternoon."

The Vandals are a two-week tour in which they've played eight shows at several bases and will go Saturday for one more show before heading back to the States.

Celebrity visitors for every taste have touched foot in Iraq since the war began. Troops have chucked to Robin Williams and Rob Schneider. Pro wrestler Diamond Dallas Page taught soldiers a few moves, while pro fisherman Ray Scott, affectionately known as the "Bass Boss," has cast lines into the Tigris River.

The Vandals admitted they don't have the drawing power of such Iraq visitors as Toby Keith, Cincinnati baseball legend Rob Dibble or the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders. But they said they were pleased with the crowds they got from an entertainment-starved military.

"You rock out to the band you have, not the band you wish you had," guitarist Warren Fitzgerald said, riffing off of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's comments to troops in Kuwait who had complained the Army isn't getting enough armor.

Otherwise, there were few major events planned for New Year's Eve. Chow halls served a special menu and troops were allowed nonalcoholic beer at a few bases. But there were no big-ticket visitors as there were for Christmas Eve, when Rumsfeld stopped at Fallujah and comedian David Letterman filmed "The Late Show" from Camp Taqadum.

"It's work today, work tomorrow. We're here to work," said Specialist Joe Killo, 22, a military policeman from Columbia, Md.

"Iraqis don't celebrate our holidays, so we can't put the war on holiday."

Lawyer: Iraqi scientist has cancer

BAGHDAD — An Iraqi lawyer said Friday that one of Saddam Hussein's former top scientists, known as "Mr. Anthrax," has cancer and is dying in U.S. custody where she has been held for more than a year.

A U.S. military spokesman for detainee operations in Iraq refused to comment on the report that Huda Salih Mahdi Ammass has cancer.

"I am not able to discuss the health condition of our detainees," said Lt. Col. Barry Johnson. "Certainly we have medical care available to take care of any detainee."

Other U.S. officials said they were aware Ammass had been treated previously for cancer, but she is routinely checked to ensure there is no recurrence. They said there was no immediate concern for her health.

Ammash, a top Baath party official and biotech researcher who got her nickname for her alleged role in trying to develop bio-weapons for Saddam, is one of two women incarcerated by the U.S. military at an undisclosed location along with other top members of Saddam's regime.

Detainees released

BAGHDAD — The U.S. military said it released 260 detainees on Saturday after a security review determined they no longer posed a threat.

The review board of six Iraqi officials and three senior coalition officers made the decision of releasing the men, said spokesman Lt. Col. Barry Johnson.

More than 9,000 detainees were freed in 2004, with about 1,000 releases occurring in December.

The review board set up by coalition forces and the interim Iraqi government began work in August following a torture scandal at the Abu Ghraib prison.

The U.S. military continues to detain some 7,000

people at Camp Bucca near Umm Qasr and Abu Ghraib prison, Johnson said. More than 1,000 detainees will be prosecuted for involvement in insurgent activities, including possessing illegal weapons and attacking coalition troops and Iraqi security forces.

Terror attacks in Iraq

BAGHDAD — Terror boss Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's group claimed responsibility for a number of attacks targeting security forces around Iraq earlier this week.

In one of the bloodiest days in recent months, militants killed some 20 policemen on Tuesday in attacks in various Iraqi provinces.

The group also claimed responsibility for an attack on American post in Samarra the same day. The U.S. military had said three militants were killed in that operation, but al-Qaida claimed that two were injured.

Iraqi coins reintroduced

BAGHDAD — Iraq will reintroduce coins into circulation for the first time since Saddam Hussein's regime abolished them in the aftermath of the 1990 Gulf War, a spokesman said Saturday.

Starting next week, Iraqis will be able to use coins of 25, 50 and 100 dinars, Central Bank spokesman Zuhair Ali Akbar said.

Coins were scrapped in 1991, when the international embargo sent Iraq's annual inflation rate soaring upward of 1,000 percent.

Hyperinflation caused the dinar's exchange rate to fall drastically, thus making coins and small denomination banknotes virtually worthless.

The Iraqi currency, which had been worth US\$3.2 prior to the 1989 invasion of Kuwait, sank to 3,000 dinars to the U.S. dollar by 1996.

It fluctuated wildly in the wake of the U.S.-led invasion in March 2003, but has since stabilized at about 1,450 to the dollar.

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Iraqis used to sounds of coalition forces

BY RAWYA RAGEH
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — It's the time of the year for the music world's Top 10 lists. Iraqis who wake and fall asleep to explosions and gunfire have something else to offer: The Top 10 distinctive sounds heard in Baghdad's daily life.

What Iraqis say they "listen" to: 10. The roar of power generators. "Oh! They are our best friends, those generators," said Mahassen Chalabi, a 40-year-old accountant. "We've been living in war since 1980 and generators have been the one useful thing — we lose power in both summer and winter and without the coolers and heaters, God knows how it'll be."

9. Gunfire. "We hear no birds, we hear bullets. It's the most disturbing sound," said George Nicholas, a 25-year-old literature student. "I automatically start seeing scary images in my mind," he added. "It's like being in the Wild West."

8. Construction. "I actually don't mind it. It reflects our determination against terrorists —

they bring down one house, we build another," said Mohammed Basil, a 34-year-old marketing executive. "But I mind it when it's something built by foreign troops — we don't want them to build stuff and stay."

7. Police and ambulance sirens. "Our life now has become all about sirens," said Ammar Mansour, a 27-year-old businessman.

"Before, we used to shriek at the sound of sirens, but now compliance rules."

6. Loudspeaker warnings by coalition patrols: "You'll be driving and they'll yell at you 'Stop! Let the patrol pass first, and one can't help wonder: how rude," said Mohammed Ahmed, a computer science engineer.

5. The rattle of tanks and Humvees. "Don't they say the war is over? Why then the tanks and those scary vehicles?" said Mohammed Hashem, 21. "I can understand these vehicles patrolling the major highways, but why the narrow residential streets? And they have this habit of not coming alone, there has to be a whole loud bunch."

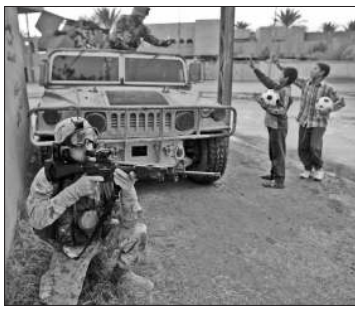
4. The clatter of helicopters. "It's so provocative, those army helicop-

ters flying all the time above us," said Khawla Adnan, a 40-year-old former civil servant. "What's even more annoying is that they fly at such low altitude, and the kids get really scared," she added.

3. Sirens in the Green Zone, the fortified home of the U.S. Embassy and headquarters of the interim government. "This particular siren really depresses me," said Umm Mustafa, a mother of two and a Green Zone resident. "I wonder what its use is. The Green Zone is frequently attacked anyway and the siren goes off after the attack takes place, so what's the point?"

2. Explosions. "It's the sound that has come to accentuate our misery," Duha Mohammed, a doctor's assistant, said of car bombs that hit Baghdad almost every day. "Day after day, these booms terrorize us. It's one redundant sound the people have become sick and tired of. It hurts us to see our city destroyed by these criminals."

1. Silence. "Believe it or not, what petrifies me most is when it gets quiet, I feel like it's the silence that precedes a storm," said Chaki Shukri, 41. "Normalcy for us is the noise of helicopters, gunfire, explosions and sirens."



A U.S. Marine points his rifle, looking for potential threats, while in the background Iraqi children holding soccer balls given to them by the Marines hold out their hands as a Marine gives them sweets, during a patrol, in Ramadi, Iraq. Iraqis have become accustomed to the sights and sounds of coalition forces.

Staff Sgt. Bryce Rigby questions four residents about threats made to a kindergarten teacher last week in a southern Baghdad neighborhood. With him is one of the unit's Iraqi interpreters, who wears a mask to hide his identity.

JASON CHUDY/Stars and Stripes



Good deeds opposed

Insurgents make threats to Iraqi teacher after U.S. soldiers visit Baghdad school

BY JASON CHUDY
Stars and Stripes

Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment had a single mission when they knocked on the gate of a kindergarten in a southern Baghdad neighborhood on Sunday afternoon: distribute stuffed animals and school supplies to the kids and give the stuff a new place heater.

But the seemingly simple, good deed led to frustration on the soldiers' parts and fear for one Iraqi woman. As they knocked on the metal gate in front of the school, the young, nicely dressed woman repeatedly told the unit's interpreter that she didn't want the soldiers to come in.

"We had been there before," said Staff Sgt. Bryce Rigby, the patrol sergeant. "The woman at the front gate had always let us in."

Though visibly distressed by the soldiers' presence, she grudgingly relented, and the young children's faces beamed as the loot was passed out.

The patrol left after about 30 minutes, moving on to visit and search an adjacent house. The rest of the afternoon patrol went without incident.

But when the platoon returned to the area for an evening patrol, it received distressing news.

The woman's fears about the visit were not unfounded. She had been followed home and threatened by insurgents.

"Without a doubt it was someone in the neighborhood," Rigby said. "They obviously had someone talk to them."

The soldiers returned to the neighborhood that evening, frustrated at the results of their good deed.

"It makes you angry to do something good ... and the insurgents come in behind us and threaten them," said Sgt. Michael Wilbanks. "It makes you dislike the insurgents even more."

Platoon soldiers banged on the metal gates of nearby homes and tried to find out how the insurgents — mujahadeen to the locals — learned of their visit.

"[The soldiers] were ready to go through every house in the sector if need be," Rigby said. "We felt bad that the lady was harassed and we wanted to find out who was harassing her."

The soldiers questioned the residents about the incident and told them they wanted their help in protecting the school's students and staff.

A handful of residents said they didn't know of the Americans' visit, while others admitted seeing the patrol earlier in the day. None of the residents, about a half-dozen people of varying ages in each house visited, admitted knowing who the insurgents were.

"There's nice people out there," said Wilbanks, "and they get threatened because they took toys from us."

But the soldiers didn't have time to dwell on the incident.

"We don't talk about it much unless they get killed," said Wilbanks. "We've had some Iraqis work close with us killed. We just move on."

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JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

From left: Marine Corps Pfc. Jeff Sanders, of Millmont, Pa., sits with his mother at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.; Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Dale Beatty, of North Carolina, shows off a bracelet like the ones members of his unit back in Iraq are selling to help his family; Marine Corp Cpl. Mark O'Brien of Buffalo, N.Y., paints a model car at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

They would do it again, no matter the cost

Wounded troops' first wish is to get back to battlefield

BY LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Pfc. Jeff Sanders lost his left leg three months ago when his Humvee struck a roadside bomb about 30 miles south of Baghdad.

If the Marines would let him, the 22-year-old would gladly risk his other leg, too.

"There is absolutely nothing else I'd rather do than get back out there," he said. "To be back with the unit, if it meant I could save one of their lives, I'd lose the other leg. I'd do it all over again."

"You don't realize how much you care for those guys until you're not there with them."

Sanders said most of the soldiers he has met at Walter Reed Army Medical Center also want to get back to the battlefield and, more importantly, back with their units. Despite the trauma of their injuries, most would return to danger if they could.

"I feel like I'm failing them," said Pfc. Joe Ramsey, a 20-year-old who lost his right arm during a car bomb attack in the Sunni Triangle. "I know I shouldn't feel that way, but I do. And this place isn't the real Army..."

Ramsey's unit was in Korea for almost a year before deploying to Iraq, he joked that the guys were getting a "bad reputation" for their loud parties while off duty.

Now, during his down time at the hospital, he tries to call them between shifts, but only gets to talk to them every few days.

"I miss the guys," he said.

Staff Sgt. Dale Beatty, 26, had been squad leader with his North Carolina Army National Guard unit for almost eight years before he lost both legs in February.

His unit has been selling bracelets made of rope to raise funds for his recovery, and has raised about \$3,000 so far. He wears one too, and tugs at it every time he talks about them.



Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Joe L. Bowser, of Kentucky, moves through the halls at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

"When I would go on leave, just for 15 days, I would feel guilty and need to be reunited with the guys," he said. "Now, I just want to get back with my guys."

Physical therapy provides some relief for soldiers like Beatty, who approaches his daily exercises like an assigned mission.

Since a rocket attack took Staff Sgt. Joe L. Bowser's right leg in April, his rehabilitation has included going skiing several times on a prosthetic limb. The 45-year-old knows all the staff in the physical therapy department and teases other patients around him for not having "real" injuries.

But when he talks about the soldiers still in Iraq, his excited, booming voice softens.

"Most of them were a lot younger than me, so it was like being with my kids," Bowser said. "My battle buddy was 18 years old, and she reminded me of my daughter."

Bonds soldiers develop are very strong

WASHINGTON — Experts say a soldier's desire to return to the battlefield, even after a serious injury, is not surprising.

Leonard Wong, a professor of military strategy at the U.S. Army War College, said the main concern of soldiers on the battlefield is keeping their friends safe.

Even if they have been hurt, they still have that sense of duty to their unit.

"They feel a social obligation with their friends," he said. "It's a responsibility that the group has put on them, to go out there and fight."

In a 2003 study of soldiers shortly after the end of major combat operations in Iraq, Wong found that while some soldiers fight because of a sense of larger political ideals, the primary motivation for most is simply keeping themselves and their fellow troops safe.

He said even those he met who had suffered significant trauma — like losing a close friend in battle — wanted to stay to help keep others safe.

"When I talked to officers their No. 1 fear was always losing somebody," he said. "It's not just about self-survival."

Dr. Paul Hanges, an organizational psychologist at University of Maryland, said the desire to return to the battlefield, even after a horrific injury, shows how strong the bonds soldiers develop with each other can be.

"They may have been shot, but they see their buddies still back on the line," Hanges said. "Even after a stressful and life-threatening situation, they want to go help them."

— Leo Shane

His makeshift Reserve unit trained for only a month before they entered Iraq last January, but he considers them a second family.

"You get close quick," the 45-year-old said. "They tell me they don't want me back out there, because I already did enough for them. But it's hard."

"When I got hurt, I was having more problems with not being with them than I was dealing with my lost leg."

The Department of Defense has made efforts in recent months to return wounded soldiers to active duty, even close to the battlefield. Col. Daniel Garvey, deputy commander of the Army's physical disability agency, said greater numbers of seriously wounded soldiers are returning to service because of a new emphasis on the experience and insight they can bring to units.

Navy medic Jose Ramos lost his left hand in a shoulder-fired rocket attack, but after six months of treatments he has been approved to return to duty in the coming

weeks. He will likely serve at stations outside Iraq, which is not as close to the front lines as he would have liked.

"I've been ready to go back since the day I was hurt," the 24-year-old said. "I love the field, and I love knowing that there helping the Marines."

But the others know they likely won't get the same opportunity.

Ramsey has already talked to Army officials about continuing his military career in some way, although he admits it won't be anything like his combat service.

Cpl. Mark O'Brien, 22, lost his right arm in an ambush in April and has decided to go back to college instead. He isn't happy with the decision.

"I wish I could go back and fight with my friends," he said, his voice shaking. "You can ask pretty much anyone in here and they'll tell you they want to go back."

"But it's time for me to move on. It's just tough not to be there with them."

E-mail Leo Shane at: shanel@stripes.com

IN THE WORLD

U.S. military relief operation gears up in Southeast Asia

BY ERIC TALMADGE
The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — One of the biggest U.S. military disaster relief missions in history kicked into high gear Saturday as an aircraft carrier battle group arrived off the shores of tsunami-battered Sumatra and began launching helicopters laden with supplies.

A flotilla carrying about 200 Marines and water purifying equipment was expected to arrive in Sri Lanka on Monday, meanwhile, and a former staging base for B-52 bombers in Thailand roared with the takeoffs and landings of giant cargo planes.

At least nine Seahawk helicopters from the USS Abraham Lincoln began flying badly needed relief missions, supplying material for temporary shelters into villages along Sumatra's devastated northwest coast.

As many as 100,000 people are feared dead on Sumatra, which was closest to the epicenter of the catastrophic Dec. 26 quake and tsunami. Although aid has been piling up in regional airports, officials have had trouble getting it out to the areas in need and the U.S. military was expected to ease the bottleneck.

"The issue really is how do we get help most effectively to those

who need," said U.S. Ambassador B. Lynn Pascoe.

Pascoe said although relations between Washington and Jakarta have been strained in the past over human rights concerns, the two governments were working closely on the relief mission. He sidestepped a question on whether the aid was aimed at improving U.S. standing in the world's most populous Muslim nation.

The mission is one of the largest the United States has launched in Asia since the Vietnam War. More than 20 vessels with thousands of sailors and Marines are being dispatched, along with some 1,000 land-based troops. The USS Bonhomme Richard, an amphibious assault vessel carrying Marines, and the Lincoln battle group were to lead the operations from the seas.

Thailand's Vietnam War-era air base of Utapao has become the airlift hub for the region. Nine C-130 transport craft took off Friday to rush medical and other supplies to the stricken resorts of southern Thailand and the more distant airfields in Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and Japan are among the core of nations contributing ships or planes and helping plan relief operations. The U.S. military contribution is by far the largest.



A Tibetan Buddhist girl prays Saturday as Christian nuns look on during a prayer service to express sympathy for tsunami victims in Bangalore, India.

Rain, aftershocks add to Asia's mounting misery

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Pounding rain drenched the wrecked city of Banda Aceh and aftershocks shook the area Saturday, adding to the problems of homeless earthquake and tsunami survivors and heightening fears of

waterborne diseases. Flash floods in Sri Lanka forced evacuations and thwarted aid deliveries.

Worldwide donations to aid those battered by the huge waves that slammed Asian and African nations approached \$1 billion, and a steady stream of foreign military aircraft touched down in the epicenter of the disaster, the Aceh province on the northern tip of Indonesia's Sumatra island.

Nine U.S. helicopters dropped off supplies at decimated coastal cities — trying to circumvent the bottlenecks that have seen thousands of boxes of food, medicines, water, tents and blankets stacking up at warehouses with not enough hands to get them to survivors. Officials said they were trying to ramp up distribution as fast as possible.

"The scale of the disaster is just too big," said Andi Mallareng, spokesman for Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. "We can bring in the aid, food, but we need manpower to distribute them."

Six days after the earthquake and tsunami, the confirmed death toll passed 123,000. U.N. humanitarian chief Jan Egeland estimated the number of dead was approaching 150,000.

Japan increased its pledge of aid from \$30 million to \$500 million, the largest single nation donation yet. A day earlier, the United States raised its promise of help to \$350 million.

Britain has pledged \$95 million, Sweden \$75 million and Spain \$68 million.

Flash floods in eastern Sri Lanka on Saturday forced the evacuation of 2,000 people from low-lying areas already affected by the tsunami, officials said.

Police officer Neville Wijesinghe said several roads leading to the eastern town of Ampara, one of the worst hit by the tsunami, were blocked by floodwaters, preventing aid trucks from getting through for several hours.

Aftershocks rattled the region, including a 6.5-magnitude quake 215 miles west of Banda Aceh on Saturday, the U.S. Geological Survey said. Smaller aftershocks hit northern Sumatra and the Nicobar and Andaman islands, a remote Indian archipelago just north of Sumatra. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said the aftershocks were too small to trigger tsunamis.

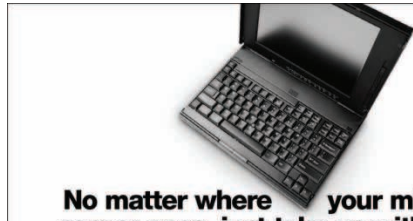
Saturday's rainstorm in Banda Aceh was the first since last Sunday's disaster. Health workers have warned that heavy rain could spread diseases like cholera and diarrhea. Thousands of uncollected corpses remain in and around the city.

At one refugee camp on the grounds of the airport, hundreds of people spent a damp night under plastic sheets. Mothers nursed babies while others tried to light a fire with damp matches.

"With no help we will die," said Indra Syaputra. "We came here because we heard that we could get food, but it was nonsense. All I got was some packets of noodles."

In the northern Aceh town of Bireun, officials warned that as many as 18,000 refugees were threatened with disease and starvation unless aid arrived soon.

"The government has been too slow in handing distribution of aid," said Riswan Ali, a refugee acting as a coordinator in Bireun. "We need water. Our children are sick. They need food and medicine. Please help us."



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Japan pledges aid

TOKYO — Japan pledged up to \$500 million in grant aid for tsunami disaster relief on Saturday, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi announced, making the country the largest single donor to victims of the catastrophe.

Koizumi said Japan — which had previously pledged more than \$30 million to the relief effort — would extend the aid to affected countries and international organizations.

The promise pushed the world aid pledge to the disaster zone well over \$1 billion.

It also put Asia's biggest and wealthiest economy at the top of the global donor effort to help countries recover from the tsunami disaster.

Pope praises relief

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II celebrated a special Mass early Saturday in his private chapel for the victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami and later publicly praised the outpouring of aid for the stricken populations as a sign of hope for 2005.

"Once more I express my nearness to the populations struck by the tragic cataclysm of these past days," John Paul said in a New Year's Day greeting from his studio window overlooking St. Peter's Square at noon.

"In assuring my prayer for the victims of the catastrophe and for their families, I note far from the solidarity efforts which are developing in every part of the world," the pontiff said, sitting in a chair in front of the studio window as thousands of people listened below in the square.

John Paul has made several trips to encourage international relief efforts for victims of the earthquake-triggered tsunami that swamped coastlines in Asia and Africa.

Brewery helps victims

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Sri Lanka's top brewery normally produces 160,000 bottles of beer a day. Now the plant has been turned into a technical unit to producing a very different beverage: potable water for the survivors of the Asian tsunami disaster.

But the Lion Brewery had a problem to start with, because the color and labeling of the bottles made the water look like beer, said Naufar Rahim, a senior company executive.

"So we then made an urgent request to get white glass bottles and that they are now coming," she said.

After hearing reports that survivors of last Sunday's disaster were drinking contaminated water, the company quickly summoned workers and all executives to the bottling plant.

The whole plant had to be cleaned and the beer remaining in the system had to be purged.

"We needed every hand because the packing of the water bottles had to be done manually," said Rahim.

Even our managers got into the aid and helped the staff to manually sort the bottles in packages," Rahim said.

From The Associated Press

Vigils and prayers usher in New Year

BY JOHN LEICESTER

The Associated Press

PARIS — Prayers and candlelight vigils were substituted for parties across Asia, while Paris draped black cloths along the Champs-Élysées. Revelers in New York's Times Square marked a moment of silence as the world brought in the New Year mourning the victims of a devastating tsunami.

From Europe to Africa, the joy celebrating the leap into 2005 was clouded by the sheer scale of last weekend's earthquake and tsunami tragedy, which killed more than 123,000 people in Asia and Africa and left millions of others homeless.

"Never has this step into a new year felt heavier," said Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson, who urged Swedes to light candles in their windows as a vigil. "We should have celebrated with fireworks and festivities. Now that feels completely wrong."

In tsunami-battered Thailand, hundreds of mourners — many clutching white roses and candles — gathered in the resort of Phuket to remember lost loved ones and friends.

Paul Foley, a native of Essex, England, who lives in Chalok, Thailand, said he believed people around the world would "spend a few moments ... thinking kind of differently."

In Europe, thousands were struggling with the loss of loved ones and friends. The confirmed death tolls for many European countries were in the double digits, but officials warned the final tallies would be in the hundreds or even thousands. For Sweden alone, 2,500 tourists were still missing, while Switzerland

Tsunami victims struggle on remote Indian islands

BY NEELESH MISRA

The Associated Press

PORT BLAIR, India — Six ferretboats joined a remote southern Indian archipelago where villagers were fighting Saturday to survive without water or food after Asia's devastating tsunami, officials said.

The 5.2-5.9 magnitude tremors on Friday night and early Saturday came as authorities tried to rescue the survivors who are desperate for humanitarian aid.

India has so far denied international aid groups access to enter most of the island territory of Andaman and Nicobar, the last tsunami blind spot where casualties are not known but feared to be in the thousands.

There is nothing to eat here. There is no water. In a couple of days, people will start dying of hunger," said Anup Ghatak, a utility



Thais and foreigners put candles on a long tray during a candlelight vigil for tsunami victims in Phuket province, Thailand, on Friday night. Around the world, many New Year's Eve revelers paused their celebrations to mourn the victims of last week's tsunami in Asia and Africa.

land was waiting to hear from some 700 and the French reported at least 118 disappeared.

Outgoing Secretary of State Colin Powell, a native New Yorker, pressed a giant button with Mayor Michael Bloomberg in Times Square, setting the famed crystal-covered ball slowly moving down to count the seconds until the new year.

At 8:15 p.m., the crowd quipped to mark a moment of silence to honor those killed in the earthquake and tsunami.

"I think we all have to look in the mirror tonight before we go to bed and recognize just how lucky we are and that not everyone else is so lucky," Bloomberg said.

Many of the estimated 1 million revelers around the glittering, firework-illuminated harbor in Sydney, Australia, also marked a moment of silence for victims.

"You could call people were a little more reverent tonight; it was kept in people's thoughts," British tourist Mark Stiles said.

Stores in major German cities reported a decline in sales of fireworks following appeals

from Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and others for the money usually spent on pyrotechnics to be donated to relief agencies.


In Paris, 480 scarf-like strips of black cloth hung along the Champs-Élysées and on light posts at the nearby Place de la Concorde — a deliberately discreet but poignant gesture to victims.

"This night cannot be ordinary because of this mourning affecting the entire planet," Deputy Mayor Anne Hidalgo said.

Many Asians were too busy counting the dead, feeding survivors and combating disease to even think about partying.

Fireworks and celebrations were canceled throughout Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, the Islamic sultanate of Brunei and much of India as government agencies urged people to attend religious services instead.

"Let's welcome the new year without a party because now we are filled with concern and sadness," Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said. "Let's pray together and hopefully God will not give us another disaster."





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Fire kills 175 in Argentina nightclub

More than 700 injured; mayor says locked exit doors likely kept many from escaping

BY KEVIN GRAY
The Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Authorities were searching Saturday for the business partners of a Buenos Aires nightclub owner after a fire that killed 175 people and injured hundreds after survivors said the building's emergency exits were locked.

Club owner Omar Chahan was detained Friday and was expected to face questioning by a federal judge in the coming days about the disaster, which happened late Thursday.

Meanwhile, families and city officials continued to work to identify victims and the injured. For a second straight day, workers posted lists of people being treated on walls outside the city's hospitals, where families gathered for news of their loved ones.

Investigators said they believed one of Argentina's worst di-

asters began when a flare was fired during a rock concert, igniting the foam ceiling of a club crowded mostly with teenagers.

Another 714 people were injured in the blaze, which set off a stampede for the exits as the concert hall filled with thick, black smoke. At least 102 people were reported to be in critical condition, said Julio Salinas, an official with the Buenos Aires emergency services department.

The fire tore through the Cro-Magnon Republic nightclub, where the Argentine rock band Los Callejeros was playing to a crowd of 4,000 people. News reports said the nightclub had a capacity of 1,500 people.

Witnesses described chaotic scenes of people rushing for the doors amid burning debris, their vision blurred by thick smoke that also blocked out emergency lighting. Other witnesses told of people struggling to force open the doors.

A 22-year-old survivor who gave his name only as Andres said surging crowds pushed their way toward several of the club's six doors but found some of them wouldn't open.

"Once the fire erupted, everyone ran for the doors, but there was only one very narrow one open at the exit closest to us. Another wider door next to it was locked," he said.

Buenos Aires Mayor Anibal Ibarra said four of the building's doors — including two emergency exits — were either tied shut with wire or locked with padlocks in an apparent attempt to prevent people from entering without paying.

"Had they been open, we surely would have avoided a lot of deaths," he said, calling the locked doors an "irresponsible act."

"It seems they were condemned to a terrible trap," said Interior Minister Anibal Fernandez.



Grieving family members react after finding their loved ones in the morgue of a local hospital. A fire swept through a crowded nightclub during a rock concert Friday in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 175 people and leaving more than 700 injured.

Holiday revelry leaves 11 dead in Philippines

The Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — At least 11 people were killed and nearly 600 injured as Filipinos welcomed 2005 with daredevil revelry, but there were fewer fireworks blasts and less celebratory gunfire than in the past, offi-

cials said Saturday.

More people converged Friday night to watch official fireworks displays organized in three areas of Manila's tourist and financial districts to discourage rowdier celebrations.

But those who lit powerful firecrackers and defied a ban on the celebratory firing of guns were as careless as in the past, despite a government campaign against dangerous celebrations that have often made the city's alleys resemble smoke-shrouded war zones on New Year's Eve.

Of the 11 deaths monitored by police in the two weeks the ended Saturday, seven were caused by a firecracker-ignited fire, three by stray bullets and one by a firecracker blast, Batasid said. He said 547 people were injured by firecrackers and 30 by stray bullets.



Interim Palestinian leader and presidential front-runner Mahmoud Abbas, center, waves to supporters as he steps from his motorcade Saturday during a visit to the Rafah refugee camp, southern Gaza Strip.

Abbas welcomed by Rafah gunmen

The Associated Press

RAFAH REFUGEE CAMP, Gaza Strip — Dozens of gunmen gave a warm welcome to interim Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas on Saturday, hoisting him on their shoulders and pledging loyalty to his campaign for the Palestinian presidency.

The gunmen were among tens of thousands of people to greet Abbas in Rafah, a teeming camp in southern Gaza that has seen some of the heaviest fighting during the past four years of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

The camp was decorated with large posters of Abbas, and the crowd was in such a frenzy that Abbas was forced to leave an indoor campaign rally through the window of the building.

"Rafah suffers from oppression and occupation, but it will not be defeated and humiliated and will not back down except after victory and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital," Abbas told the cheering crowd. Abbas, the front-runner in the Jan. 9 presidential election, has been courted armed groups in recent days, even though he has spoken out against violence and called for a negotiated settlement with Israel. The campaigning has prompted questions about whether Abbas is playing campaign politics or identifying with violent groups.

Abbas, who lives in the West Bank, traveled to Gaza to mark the 40th anniversary of the ruling Fatah movement.

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Handicapped teen reaches pole goal

The Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — A handicapped Polish teenager reached the South Pole on Friday after a 120-mile trek, achieving his goal of making it to both ends of the Earth within a calendar year, a spokeswoman said.

Janek Mela, 16, who lost his right arm and left leg in an accident two years ago, reached the pole with two companions with whom he set off Dec. 17, said Janina Slivicka, who talked to the expedition's leader over a satellite phone.

"They are happy they made it, but very tired and they need sleep," Slivicka said.

Mela set a record in April by becoming the youngest and most severely handicapped person to reach the North Pole, when he trekked some 90 miles in forbidding weather, she said.

Leading both trips was Marek Kaminski, a businessman who reached both ends of the globe on solo trips in 1996 and 1997. A cameraman also was part of the team.

For the South Pole trip, the team was flown to a temporary base from which they started their two-week trek. A plane was due to pick them up from the pole and take them back to the base, Slivicka said.

IN THE STATES

Crowds ring in new year

BY DESMOND BUTLER

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Revelers from Times Square to downtown Los Angeles welcomed 2005 amid elaborate celebrations that included dazzling fireworks, laser lights and music.

Many said they hoped the new year would bring peace to all corners of the world, especially Iraq. Others prayed for tsunami victims in South Asia, saying the tragedy would be on their minds as the new year dawned.

"You still have to remember what's going on in the world because it affects everybody and it should affect the celebration," said Chris Lawrence, 21, of Newburgh, N.Y.

In the West, people crowded Las Vegas' strip to mark a New Year's Eve party billed as the nation's largest outside Times Square. A dazzling display of py-

rotechnics brightened the sky early Saturday, delighting thousands of people celebrating at hotels, clubs and even a food court-turned-nightclub.

Thousands of revelers in downtown Los Angeles partied in the new year with international DJs and carnival rides. Laser lights danced off high-rise office buildings as people waving glow sticks jammed the wide streets and danced to electronic beats into the wee hours.

"It's a bunch of kids dancing in the streets. It's awesome," said Annabelle Abayon, 29.

In New York, revelers enjoyed clear skies as they celebrated the 100th annual New Year's countdown in Times Square. And, for the first time in 32 years, the party went on without Dick Clark, who was recovering from a stroke.

Daytime talk show host Regis

Philbin stood in for Clark on ABC-TV's "New Year's Rockin' Eve," calling it "The greatest temp job in the world."

Nearly a million people filled Times Square, the festive mood broken only by a moment of silence honoring those killed in the earthquake and tsunami in South Asia.

The crowd broke into a chorus of "Auld Lang Syne" after the 1,000-pound Waterford crystal ball made its descent from atop Times Square.

Outgoing Secretary of State Colin Powell, a native New Yorker, pressed a giant button with Mayor Michael Bloomberg to begin the ball's descent.

"In my lifetime I've served in many places around the world, and wherever I happened to be the turn of the year just didn't feel right unless I had in some way seen or heard about the ball coming down on time," Powell said Friday.



Confetti snows down in New York's Times Square moments after the new year begins Saturday. A century after the first New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square, close to a million revelers welcomed 2005 with loud cheering, confetti, fireworks and kisses, while also pausing to mourn those lost in the South Asia tsunami.

Memo clarifies torture prohibition, but impact uncertain

BY KEN GUGGENHEIM

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A prisoner doesn't have to undergo excruciating pain to be considered a victim of torture, the Justice Department now says. But it's not clear whether this revised, broader definition of torture will change the treatment of foreign detainees.

The White House says the new Justice Department memo defining torture doesn't reflect a change in policy because the administration has always abided by international laws that prohibit the mistreatment of detainees.

The memo's biggest impact could be on next week's Senate confirmation hearings

for chief White House counsel Alberto Gonzales, who was nominated by President George W. Bush to replace John Ashcroft as attorney general.

Gonzales and other administration lawyers wrote memos that said the president's wartime powers superseded anti-torture laws and treaties. Human rights advocates say those memos effectively condoned abuse and set the stage for the mistreatment of inmates at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and at Guantanamo Bay.

The Justice Department in June specifically disavowed an August 2002 memo to Gonzales that said cruel, inhuman and degrading acts may not be considered torture if they don't produce intense pain and suffering.

That memo was replaced by the Dec. 30

memo from Daniel Levin, acting chief of the Office of Legal Counsel. It opens by bluntly stating "Torture is abhorrent both to American law and values and to international law."

The 17-page memo does not address two of the most controversial assertions in the first memo: that Bush, as commander in chief in wartime, had authority superseding anti-torture laws and that U.S. personnel had legal defenses against criminal liability in such cases.

Levin said those issues need not be considered because they "were not inconsistent with the president's unequivocal directive that United States personnel not engage in torture."

But the new document contradicts the previous version, saying torture need not be

limited to pain "equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death."

Instead, the memo concludes that anti-torture laws passed by Congress equate torture with physical suffering "even if it does not involve severe physical pain" but still must be more than "harmful and transitory." That can include mental suffering under certain circumstances, but it would not have to last for months or years, as the previous document said.

The White House said Friday that the United States has operated under the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit violence, torture and humiliating treatment.

Associated Press writer Curt Anderson contributed to this report.

Calif., Nevada reeling from winter storms

The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — An unrelenting storm brought more rain and snow to Southern California on Friday, while residents in the Sierra Nevada dug out from as much as 8 feet of snow.

Storms this week have battered California, Arizona, Nevada and Colorado. Three to 4 feet of snow have already fallen on Nevada mountains and as much as a foot of snow came down in the mountains of Colorado. At least nine people have died.

Heavy rain pounded Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles counties. Los Angeles had almost 1.2 inches by midnight, giving it more than 8 inches for the week. Snow was falling over the Tejon Pass on Interstate 5, the main artery linking Los Angeles to the Central Valley and Northern California.

In the Sierra, up to 8 feet of snow



Martha, an old English bulldog, pulls owner Irina Sotnikov through the snow as they go for a walk in the hills of northwest Reno, Nev., during a snowstorm Thursday.

had fallen since Thursday, temporarily shutting down the main highways to Lake Tahoe-area ski resorts and snarling holiday traffic. An avalanche warning was posted for backcountry ski areas from Yuba Pass to Sonora Pass.

The snowfall in Reno was the heaviest in that part of Nevada in more than a decade, as snow forced the airport to shut down

Thursday for only the second time in 40 years, a spokesman said.

A break in the storm allowed Interstate 80 and U.S. 50 to reopen Friday after being closed off and on for more than a day.

Another band of storms was forecast Saturday in Northern California, said weather service meteorologist Daniel Harry.

Five people have died in the storms in California since Monday.

California law gives gay couples many of the benefits of marriage

BY LISA LEFF

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Like many gay couples, Brian Cornell and her partner Rutliffa long ago established a legal framework for their relationship to match the depth of their emotional commitment.

They drew up wills naming the other as beneficiary, property agreements and powers of attorney, among other documents. The couple of 27 years from Oakland, Calif., wanted to spell out specifics that would have been presumed if they were married.

From Saturday, such improvised arrangements become much less necessary for them and for nearly 29,000 other California couples — the majority of them same-sex mates. A law gives gay and elderly couples who register as domestic partners nearly the same responsibilities and benefits as married spouses.

Same-sex couples in California for the first time have access to a

divorce court for dividing their assets, seeking alimony and securing child support. They also will have automatic parental status over children born during the relationship and responsibility for each other's debts.

It guarantees domestic partners a say over what happens to their loved one's remains at death, means they can't be forced to testify against each other in state courts and provides for conjugal visits in state prisons.

For Cornell, 47, and Rutliffa, 57, one of the biggest changes the California Domestic Partner Rights and Responsibilities Act brings is the ability for them to get a marriage-couple dispute on their home and car insurance.

Two groups opposed to marriage rights for gay couples have sued to have it thrown out. They claim it violates the intent of a 2000 ballot initiative approved by voters that holds California will only recognize unions between a man and a woman.

NASA fired up about real-life Deep Impact

Spacecraft to blast hole in comet and analyze its core

By MARCIA DUNN

The Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The big, grown-up boys on the NASA team can hardly wait. Next Fourth of July, they get to bust up a comet, Hollywood-style.

"Blow things up? I'm there. Yeah, I don't have any issue with that," says Richard Grammer, manager of the project for Jet Propulsion Laboratory. (And, oh yeah, he used to work with explosives in the military.)

The spacecraft is called Deep Impact, just like the 1998 movie about a comet headed straight for Earth. NASA's goal is to blast a crater into Comet Tempel 1 and analyze the ice, dust and other primordial stuff hurled out of the pit.

Mission planners say the energy produced will be like 4.5 tons of TNT going off — producing a fireworks display for the world's observatories.

Scientists know little about comets and even less about their nuclei, or cores. They believe that penetrating the interior for observations by space and ground telescopes is the next best thing to actually landing, scooping up samples and delivering them to Earth.

"A simple return would be the ultimate, but this is one exciting

mission because for the first time we're actually reaching out and we're going to create our own crater," says Donald Yeomans, a senior research scientist at JPL in California — and an adviser on the movie.

"We'll understand how the comet is put together, its density, its porosity, whether it has a surface crust and underlying ices, whether it's layered ice, whether it's a wimpy comet or whether it's a rock-hard ice ball. All of these things will become apparent after we smack it."

Astronomers are counting on Deep Impact to live up to its Hollywood name on July 4, six months after its mid-January launch.

This is one spacecraft NASA wants to smash and trash.

"It would be like it's standing in the middle of the road and this huge semi coming down at it at 23,000 mph, you know, just bam!" Grammer says.

If all goes well, Deep Impact will be the first spacecraft to touch the surface of a comet. NASA's Stardust spacecraft — on its way back to Earth with dust from Comet Wild 2 — flew through the coma, or dusty gas cloud.

Deep Impact will have traveled 268 million miles from the time it

is launched aboard an unmanned rocket until it intersects with Comet Tempel 1 just beyond the orbit of Mars, at a point more than 80 million miles from Earth.

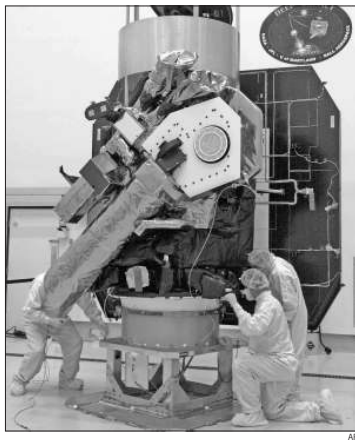
Liftoff is targeted for Jan. 12, two weeks late because of software and rocket problems. NASA has until Jan. 28 to launch Deep Impact. After that, Tempel 1 will be beyond rocket reach and scientists will have to pick another comet and swallow a lengthy delay.

That's what happened to the European Space Agency's Rosetta spacecraft, which will attempt a controlled landing on a comet, but not until 2014.

Deep Impact, by contrast, will provide "instant gratification," says Grammer. The entire \$330 million mission should be wrapped up a month after impact.

Grammer says the latest calculations put the chance of the impact missing its target at less than 1 percent. The automatic navigation software has already been tested in space; this will be a fancier version of what successfully flew on NASA's Deep Space 1, a testbed spacecraft launched in 1998, and Stardust, the earlier comet spacecraft.

"We all feel pretty comfortable with that (the odds), but as we've said before, we're doing something we haven't done before," Grammer says.



Technicians work on the Deep Impact spacecraft Dec. 23 in the clean room where the spacecraft was being processed in Titusville, Fla. Deep Impact, scheduled for launch Jan. 12, should blast a crater into comet Tempel 1 by early July, according to mission planners.

La. hotel helps heal hangovers

By CAIN BURDEAU

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — In one of those only-in-New Orleans stories, visitors who put back too many beers and hurricanes in the Big Easy have a remedy to help them shake off that dreaded New Year's hangover: Sara, the Recovery Concierge.

Name your poison, Sara Baker has the medicine: Ginger-root tea and a po-boy roll breakfast for the mildly hung over, pain killers and caffeine for those who really got sloshed the night before.

There's also potions, bath salts and steamed water to rehydrate the weary — along with sage advice on how to recuperate.

"There are two standbys that I never fail to fall back onto.

"The triple T — Tylenol, tea and toast — and Cafe Du Monde," Baker says hurriedly, her hotel bustling with New Year's traffic. "I'm here to help people handle the excesses of New Orleans."

Baker is in charge of the Leews New Orleans Hotel's hangover concierge program, which is spelled out in a booklet in every room.

It is for guests who overindulge in the city's many excesses: booze, pralines, dripping jambalaya, succulent steaks, among other temptations.

"In New Orleans you're doing so



Sara Baker, who is in charge of the Leews New Orleans Hotel's hangover concierge program, and her friend Esther Macha of Texas, right, get a message on New Year's Eve. "I'm here to help people handle the excesses of New Orleans," says Baker.

many bad things to your body — so you have to go the spa," says Leah Moss, a Texan lounging with her older sister in bath robes next to the pool at Leews getting re-energized for a turbocharged New Year's night ahead of them with gambling, a show and fireworks.

"Today we're doing hot rocks — they heat up stones and place them on different pressure points on your back to relax tension," Moss says.

The idea of a hangover concierge is not totally unique; other hotels offer spa

services meant to revitalize their guests. At the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, a make-your-own-Bloody Mary bar is offered at the spa, butlers are summoned to draw baths by dialing zero and full-body massages are on order for tired and drained guests.

"What is it about this city?" exclaimed Char Schroeder, a spokeswoman for the Ritz-Carlton.

"It is New Orleans: We want them to know that the very next day there is help for them available and there are people there who will help them if they need it."

Eye surgery brings blind man tears

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — For the first time in 22 years, a tear came to the eye of Roger Beck.

The 29-year-old man has a rare disease that cost him one eye and left him legally blind and unable to make tears in the other. But on Thursday, Dr. Randall C. Paniello transplanted a saliva gland from Beck's neck to a spot near his temple, where it can provide moisture that can preserve the eye.

The 12-hour surgery was the first of its kind in the United States, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported Friday. The procedure has been successful about 80 percent of the time in treating dry-eye conditions in other countries, the newspaper said.

Beck arrived for the operation with a baby doll and a Spider-Man doll, loaned to him by his twin 4-year-olds, Denton and Anna, in case he needed a hug or a kiss.

"If I could have produced tears, I would have had one then," Beck told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

The Stikenson resident was 7 when his immune system turned on him. He developed a high fever, then his skin turned red. Blisters soon covered him from head to toe, inside and out.

He was eventually diagnosed with Stevens-Johnson syndrome, which is usually caused by a reaction to drugs, though in Beck's case, it may have been triggered by a viral infection. His mother blames a dirty swimming pool.

Doctors warned Beck that he could lose sight in the remaining eye at any time, and a dwindling number of options to preserve the eye led to Thursday's procedure at Barnes-Jewish Hospital.

Murder rates drop in large cities in 2004

BY TOM HAYS
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Big cities were less deadly places to live in 2004 as murder rates declined in several urban areas, including New York, Chicago and Washington, D.C., according to a survey by The Associated Press.

Officials in New York and Chicago credit the drop to crime-fighting strategies that included putting more officers on the street and beefing up patrols in dangerous neighborhoods.

"We really targeted gangs, drugs and guns," Chicago police spokesman Pat Camden said. "Technology enabled us to take our gang tactical units and put them in places where we anticipated violence, areas where narcotics trafficking was bold and blatant."

There were 445 homicides in Chicago as of Thursday, compared with 600 in all of 2003, police said. That is a decrease of about 25 percent, and would mark the first year since 1965 the city finished with fewer than 500 murders. The high mark was in 1992, when there were 940.

Exceptions to the trend were St. Louis, Detroit and Baltimore, where killings were up following steady declines.

The overall results were consistent with official FBI statistics for the first six months of 2004, which showed a nearly 6 percent fall in murders for the nation.

In New York, the murder total was 565 as of Thursday, from 596 in 2003. The total appeared certain to remain below 600 for the third year in a row — levels comparable to the early 1960s. New York saw a slight increase in murders in 2003.

Experts agree that police deserve credit for driving down murders. But they add that other factors — including a growing adult population less prone to violence — are in play.

Elsewhere, Washington was on track to see one of its lowest murder rates in recent years. Through Monday, homicides totaled 193, compared with 240 at the same point in 2003.

Other cities reporting decreases in homicides were Las Vegas, Miami, Phoenix and Philadelphia, while numbers in Los Angeles and San Diego were about even with last year.

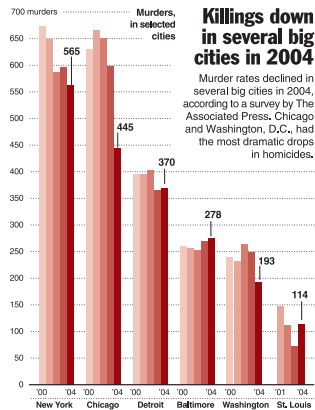
The steepest increase was in St. Louis, where through Thursday murders were up 56 percent — to 114 from 73. But police say the total still is the third-lowest in nearly 40 years, and argue that a campaign to tame a dangerous drug trade is working.

Killings also were up in Detroit to 384, including one early Friday, from a total of 366 in 2003. But police view the total favorably considering the year started with a rash of killings that drove the murder rate up 50 percent through April.

Police spokesman James Tate said the department reversed the trend in part by "putting the crunch on illegal narcotics," an effort that resulted in the confiscation of 574 million in drugs.

A violent drug trade also has fueled an increase in stayings in Baltimore amid continuing turmoil in police leadership, officials said. The city had logged 278 murders through Thursday, compared with 271 at the same time last year.

Associated Press writers Brian Witte in Baltimore, Nathaniel Hernandez in Chicago, Sarah Karush in Detroit and Jim Saiter in St. Louis contributed this report.



Killings down in several big cities in 2004

Murder rates declined in several big cities in 2004, according to a survey by The Associated Press. Chicago and Washington, D.C., had the most dramatic drops in homicides.

At least it's for charity



Participants enter the water during the 17th Annual Lobster Dip race into the Atlantic Ocean at Old Orchard Beach, Maine, on Saturday. Close to 500 people braved the 42-degree water while helping to raise funds for the Maine Special Olympics.

Various English words take a hit on the annual word ban campaign

BY DAVID N. GOODMAN
The Associated Press

DETROIT — From wardrobe malfunctions to erectile dysfunction, it's been a tough year all around for the guardians of English — language purists from blue, red and battleground states who long to say "You're fired!" to offensive words and phrases.

More than 2,000 nominations arrived in Michigan's far north, where a committee at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie released its 2005 compilation of language irritants Friday.

Among the 22 expressions on the "List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness" are "blog," "sale event," "body wash" and "zero percent APR financing."

"We're uber-serious about this list," said committee organizer Tom Pink, referring to the German prefix meaning "over" or "super" that increasingly finds its way into English.

Group members act as "linguistic sounding boards," said John

And the nominees are...

The Associated Press

Lake Superior State University's 2005 list of banned words, and comments from contributors.

- Blue states/red states
- Flip flop/flip flopper/flip flopping
- Battleground state
- And I approve this message
- Pockets of resistance
- Improvised explosive device, or what once was known as a bomb
- Enemy combatant
- Carbs
- You're fired!
- Uber
- "tuzel speak, as in such expressions as fashizzle, meaning for sure.

- Wardrobe malfunction
- Blog and its variations, including blogger, blogging, blogosphere
- Webinar, for seminar on the Web
- Zero percent APR financing
- Safe and effective
- Erectile dysfunction
- Journey, in reaction to reality show contestant comments about "how amazing the journey was"
- Body wash, once known as soap
- Sale event
- All new, as in television episodes
- And more, as in "it's a hamburger meal, but it's much, much more."

Source: Lake Superior State University

Shibley, co-compiler of the list.

Now in its 30th year, the banned word list has drawn imitators and critics. Among the latter are members of the American Dialect Society, who choose their "Words of the Year" at a Jan. 7 annual meeting in Oakland, Calif. Made up of academic linguists, the group is less judgmental and more descrip-

tive in its approach.

Many words appear on both lists.

Shibley said the Lake Superior State group compiles the list in the spirit of fun, and going through old lists can be "like cutting across a lost script from an Austin Powers movie."

Ohio Supreme Court bans tobacco ads on free matchbooks

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Matchbooks given out at bars and stores cannot bear advertising for cigarettes or other tobacco products under the 1998 settlement involving 46 states and the major tobacco companies, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled.

The promotional matchbooks fit the definition of merchandise and are governed

by the ban on youth-oriented tobacco marketing in the settlement, which included Ohio, according to Thursday's unanimous ruling.

Ohio used R.J. Reynolds over matchbooks advertising the company's cigarette brands, saying they were much older than merchandise prohibited in the settlement.

Reynolds, a subsidiary of Reynolds American Inc., contended the matchbooks

were not banned by the detailed agreement, which ended class-action lawsuits brought by the states.

Reynolds won in Franklin County Common Pleas Court, which held that free matchbooks were not merchandise. But the 10th Ohio District Court of Appeals in Columbus reversed that ruling, and the Supreme Court agreed.

The ruling quoted the matchbook manu-

facturer's promotional materials saying that "for every person who picks up a matchbook, there are eight other people who typically see it."

The states that signed the settlement agreement with the companies are supposed to get the \$206 billion over 25 years, including \$10 billion for Ohio. In addition, the tobacco companies promised not to market to children and teens.

Controversial street

CO LONGMOUNT — The City Council will rename Chivington Drive after protests that the street honors Col. John Chivington, who is blamed for the slaughter of more than 150 Indians in the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864.

"Longmont set a historic precedent tonight," activist Glenn Spaulding said after the 6-1 vote Tuesday. "I've never been so proud of my city and City Council. It was racist and insensitive to the Native American community."

Militiamen under Chivington's command launched an unprovoked attack on a Cheyenne and Arapahoe encampment on Sand Creek about 160 miles southeast of Denver. Most of the dead were elderly men, women and children.

Mayor Julia Pirnack said she was not convinced the street was named after the colonel, but she said she supported the change to end the years-long debate.

Baby-biting charge

NY BATAVIA — A Batavia man accused of biting his 3-month-old son because the infant wouldn't stop crying has been charged with felony assault.

Michael Bennett, 23, was indicted on two counts of second-degree assault by a Genesee County grand jury. He was arrested Nov. 18 after taking his son to a Batavia hospital for treatment of bruises to his cheeks, which he suffered two days earlier when he was allegedly bitten by his father, police said.

Family members contacted the Genesee County Department of Social Services after seeing the bruises. County officials then notified police. Bennett faces up to seven years in state prison.

Tainted cafeteria food

IL JOLIET — Will County officials dropped criminal charges against two employees of the state Board of Education accused of allowing tainted food to be served to schoolchildren.

Officials said the state code didn't compel Mark Haller and Katherine Keylor to take action. The two, who worked in Springfield, were responsible for the state's school lunch program.

Woman, car under ice

PA PORTERSVILLE — Divers searching a frozen lake found the body of a 55-year-old woman who apparently had been driving in circles on the ice and may have been lost, officials said.

The body of Betty L. Martof was found in a car submerged in 12 feet of water in Moraine State Park's Lake Arthur on Tuesday, one day after park officials reported vehicle tracks leading to a hole in the ice.

Authorities believe she drove onto a snowmobile trail that led onto the lake and then drove on the ice for about a half-mile, making tracks in tight circles, before the ice broke.

Christmas Eve layoffs

MI DETROIT — Union officials criticized Detroit Public Schools for sending layoff notices to hundreds of teachers on Christmas Eve.

The layoffs affect 372 low-senior-



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

ity teachers who are assigned to subjects without teacher shortages. The cuts, effective Feb. 25, are expected to save the district about \$8 million, a schools spokesman said.

Very young voters

NH LEBANON — Hoping to make government more meaningful to young people, a state lawmaker is working a bill to allow teenagers as young as 14 to vote in municipal elections.

State Rep. Susan Almy, D-Lebanon, wants to give towns and cities the option of providing partial votes to teenagers. Under her plan, 14- and 15-year-olds would get a quarter-vote each, while teens who are 16 and 17 would get a half-vote apiece.

Lebanon High School teacher Andrew Gamble suggested the idea to Almy after hearing about efforts by a California state senator to create a similar "fractional voting" system for state and local elections.

Honesty pays off

MO ST. LOUIS — After briefly considering keeping \$21,500 he found in a shopping cart at work, 17-year-old Jeff Aitken fought the temptation and reunited the cash with its rightful owner.

That honesty this month made his mother mighty proud, though she couldn't communicate it well.



Don't flinch

Zac Archuleta, bottom, closes his eyes as his friend Brian Cotner jumps over him at the skate park in Nampa, Idaho, as they enjoy Christmas vacation.

For the past three years, Lou Gehrig's disease had robbed 53-year-old Bev Aitken of her ability to speak. So when she lost her fight the day after the Christmas, Bev Aitken left feeling quite rich about her son's conscience, relatives say.

"I think it gave her hope that everything was going to be OK once she left," Jeff's 20-year-old sister, Jen, said Tuesday from the family's home in Overland, a St. Louis suburb.

Jeff Aitken's life — and that of his family — could have taken a different path Dec. 11, when he spotted a bag full of \$100 bills in a cart at a Schnucks supermarket at the end of his shift.

All told, the bag held \$21,500 — cash Aitken knew could have had many uses, including covering some of the family's health-care costs.

Aitken admitted that the thought of pocketing the money crossed his mind. The only identification with the cash was a check made out to Aladdin Wireless.

He took the money to police two days later as businessman Kamal Abusharbin, having just reported losing the lot, was leaving the station.

Recognizing the bag, Abusharbin hugged the teen and gave him a \$2,000 reward, a new cell phone and a job offer at a business where Aitken can learn how to sell and fix wireless phones.

Minimum-wage hike

WA TUMWATER — The state minimum hourly wage will increase by 19 cents Saturday to \$7.35, maintaining Washington as the state with the highest minimum wage in the country, said Department of Labor and Industries spokesman Ron Langley.

Washington is one of three states, along with Oregon and Florida, that have voter mandates to automatically adjust the minimum wage each year. The federal minimum is \$5.15 an hour.

Illegal dribble

MA SPRINGFIELD — There's some unwanted dribbling going on at the Basketball Hall of Fame.

City officials say the \$109 million dome-shaped building has sprung some leaks since it was built about two years ago.

The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, along with its parking garage and 18.5-acre site, are owned by the city. The property is rented to the hall in a 99-year lease.

The state put up \$42.5 million for the museum's construction, and about \$80,000 of that is left, said city economic developer Thomas McColgan. He expects the remaining money to cover repair costs.

High marks

TN MURFREESBORO — Officials at the state's largest undergraduate university say about 60 percent of lottery scholarship recipients did well enough in their first semester to keep the stipend. Middle Tennessee State University officials say nearly 1,200 scholarship students achieved grade point averages of 3.0 or higher.



Out of control

Jaymie Sanders loses his balance after going over a bump at the Hesperus Ski Resort in Hesperus, Colo.



Sewing up their entry

Volunteer Laura Noguchi works to complete the city of Alhambra's Rose Parade float entry titled "The Proud Americans" in Pasadena, Calif.



Just hangin' out

Azy, a 27-year-old male orangutan, enjoys an unseasonably warm day and a piece of pineapple at Great Ape Trust of Iowa in Des Moines.



They'll make you flip Grapevine (Texas) High School won first place in the large intermediate varsity division at the National Cheerleaders Association's national championship at the Dallas Convention Center.



Horsing around Walter Hurst, right, puts his order for a six-pack through the drive-thru window of Sun Valley Package and Liquor in Sun Valley, Texas while Mark Lindsey, left, and Mike Hoskins, center, look on.



Mouse protection Mary Cochran, of Reno, Nev., walks home on West Second Street in downtown Reno, Nev., during a light snowstorm.



Scenic outing Todd Maas carries his kayak from the Tracyton Boat launch up to his truck after a morning of kayaking in Dyes Inlet in Bremerton, Wash.

Heartless thieves

TX ALVIN — Thieves broke into a southeast Texas storage unit and took about \$10,000 worth of about 400 already-wrapped presents a charity planned to give to poor families next Christmas, police say.

"When I saw that everything was gone I was devastated," said Carolyn Ewing, head of Manvel-based Project Love — Santa's Angels.

"I became hysterical. ... I just felt violated."

Alvin Police Chief Mike Merkel said investigators are trying to determine if the break-in was linked to two other burglaries of other units at the same Alvin storage facility earlier in December.

Guns in school

VT ESSEX — An Essex High School sophomore accused of taking a handgun to school allegedly did the same thing several times before he was caught earlier this month, police said.

The discovery of the unloaded handgun marked the first time a gun was found in the high school, police said, but school records indicate it was the fourth report of a weapon in the school since September.

Essex Police Capt. Leo Nadeau said interviews with high school students and parents revealed that the 15-year-old boy took the .45-caliber Glock handgun into school at least two times the week before the weapon was discovered.

The student will face two charges in his juvenile court legal proceedings.

2 charged in cat killing

IN EVANSVILLE — Two Wal-Mart employees who police say followed a manager's orders to shoot and kill a stray cat have been charged with federal animal cruelty.

The men, both assistant managers at the Supercenter, were arrested and released after a court appearance.

Christopher Anderson, 29, and Jeffrey Hardin, 21, told police the store's manager ordered them to get rid of the animal that was living in a storage trailer behind their store.

All managers potentially involved in the incident have been suspended without pay pending an internal investigation and could be fired, said Wal-Mart spokeswoman Sharon Weber.

Museum theft

CA DAGGETT — Skilled burglars looted a Mojave Desert museum of its most prized possessions, including antique dolls and Native American artifacts on loan from local families.

The thieves made sure an alarm system was disabled before clearing out the glass display cases in the Daggett Museum, said curator Beryl Bell, who discovered the losses when she went to feed her goldfish on Christmas Day.

"This appeared to be a very neat operation and it appeared they had a shopping list," she said.

Long-lost photos found

AL BIRMINGHAM — A search through the files of an Aniston law firm turned up long-lost photos of the burning of a bus carrying Freedom Riders

through east Alabama in 1961. The 40 photographs depicting the arson of a Greyhound bus in Aniston were donated to the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, which has an archive of photos and stories from the era.

Raise raises eyebrows

DE DOVER — Lt. Gov. John Carney agrees with critics who say a 56 percent pay raise recommended by the Delaware Compensation Commission is "too much." The hike of more than \$36,000 would bring Carney's salary to \$101,588. That's more than 20 states pay their governors. Under state law, the raise will automatically take effect unless rejected outright by the General Assembly.

Snow fund sought

IN INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Joe Keman asked President Bush to declare a snow emergency for 50 Indiana counties that would make them eligible for federal assistance. A storm last week pounded much of southern and central Indiana with two feet or more of snow.

The money would reimburse local and state agencies for 75 percent of the costs associated with snow removal and rescue efforts over 48 hours.

Pumped-up prices

OR VENETA — The City Council voted to pass a local gas tax. It will raise money to fix decaying roads and reduce a total of about \$3.6 million in deferred maintenance. Veneta becomes the most recent of a dozen cities to embrace a gas tax. Veneta's three-cent-a-gallon tax is expected to generate about \$45,000 a year, said City Administrator Ric Ingham.

Charters harder to get

MN ROSEVILLE — People who want to start state charter schools will now face stricter requirements by the state Department of Education. Potential sponsors and charter school board members will be required to receive extensive training before submitting an application. The department also will require ongoing training.

Hawks back at home

NY NEW YORK — Two red-tailed hawks whose temporary eviction from the ledge of a luxury apartment building sparked angry protests were seen roosting in their restored nesting area, the New York Audubon Society said.

Scaffolding that was used to install a new specially designed nest was removed Tuesday, and Pale Male and Lola were spotted sitting in the Manhattan structure at about noon, the organization said on its Web site. They were then seen taking twigs to the nest.

The hawks' original nest, which had been on a 12th-floor window ledge of the building on Fifth Avenue and 74th Street since 1993, was taken down on Dec. 7 after residents of the building complained it was a health and safety hazard.

For a week after the birds were evicted, bird-lovers gathered outside the building, which counts actress Mary Tyler Moore and CNN anchor Paula Zahn among its residents.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFN's Web site at <http://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil>

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2005

9-10	(AFN-FAMILY)	(AFN-MOVIE)	(AFN-NEWS)	(AFN-KOREA)	(AFN-NEWS)	(AFN-SPORTS)	(SPECTRUM)	(AFN-PACIFIC)
9:00	House of Mouse	2:13 Movie *** "The Piper" (1994, Drama) Michael Keaton. A tabloid editor pines for a girl from a mail order catalog.	Movie *** "Gentoo" (1999, Comedy) Todd Morgan, Emily Deschanel, Charles Pasik.	Andromeda crew must stop an android army.	Headline News America's Black Forum The Chris Matthews Show Headline News Corps Big Story Weekend Edition	College Football Fiesta Bowl - Michigan vs. Texas. From Pasadena, Calif. (Taped)	Latin Lifestyle Urban Style Fantasy Camp Rocker on the Road ESPN News Judge Any Motion sickness	Andromeda crew must stop an android army.
9:30	Adrianatics							
10:00	Ed, Edd n Eddy							
10:30	Philmore (L)	Movie *** "Escape From New York" (1981) Kurt Russell. The president is missing in a prison city of Manhattan.	Movie *** "On Assignment" (1997) Mike Myers. Judging any Motion sickness	Headline News ESPN News Judge Any Motion sickness				
11:00	Planet's Funniest Animals	12:30 HBO Inside Story NBA Days "Hunted"	12:30 Movie *** "A Sassy Switch" (1999) Fantasy Dan Aykroyd, Vivica A. Fox.	Headline News Any Newswatch College Football Fiesta Bowl - Georgia vs. Wisconsin. From Tampa, Fla. (Taped)	2020 Fox and Friends Fox and Friends	College Football Tostitos Fiesta Bowl - Pittsburgh vs. Utah. From Tampa, Aziz. (Taped)	All-American Festivals The Suzanne Oman Show Celebrity Poker Showdown	Movie *** "Men in Black II" (2002) Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones, Will Smith
12:00	Happy Days "Hunted"							
12:30	Movie *** "A Sassy Switch" (1999) Fantasy Dan Aykroyd, Vivica A. Fox.	12:42 Movie *** "Frequency" (2000) Dennis Quaid. A man communicates with his long-dead father via ham radio.	Headline News The Simpsons Headline News Scrubs	Headline News The Simpsons Headline News Scrubs				
13:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon	Movie *** "Fools Rush In" (1997, Comedy) Matt Perry. Pregnancy pushes one-dro into into a difficult marriage.	Movie *** "Fools Rush In" (1997, Comedy) Matt Perry. Pregnancy pushes one-dro into into a difficult marriage.	Headline News The Simpsons Headline News Scrubs				
13:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
14:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
14:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
15:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
15:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
16:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
16:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
17:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
17:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
18:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
18:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
19:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
19:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
20:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
20:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
21:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
21:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
22:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
22:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
23:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
23:30	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							
24:00	Movie *** "The Garbage-Pail Show" (1997) Philadelphia Phenomenon							

MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 2001

00:00	SpungeBob SquarePants	(11:59) Movie ***** "Glenn" Gary Glen Rows" (1992)	NFL Football: Regional Coverage	NFL Football: Regional Coverage	Tim Russert	NFL Football: Regional Coverage	Austin City Limits Gavelwood Joe Coder performs	NFL Football: Regional Coverage
00:00	Rugrats		NFL Football: Regional Coverage	NFL Football: Regional Coverage		SportsCenter	Hops & Fash	Little Bear
1:00	Karl's Bros. Be the Creature	(1:04) Movie ***** "Mystical Island" (1979) Onal	NFL Football: (Taped to Be Announced)	Little Bear	People in the News	NFL Primetime (Live)	Law & Order	Little Bear
2:30	America's Funniest Home Videos	Castaways land on a scientific genius's island holiday	Dr. Phil	Dr. Phil	This Week		Last Comic Standing	Dr. Phil
3:00	Glimore Girls "Tick, Tick, Tick"	Movie ***** "Ghosts of Mississipp" (1981) James Earl Ray, Barlow, Victor Goddard; A prosecutor reveals the case against Medgar Evers killer.	Oprah Winfrey	Oprah Winfrey	Dateline International	NFL Football: Dallas Cowboys at New York Giants. From Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. (Live)	NBC's "The Good Samaritan"	Oprah Winfrey
4:30	American Dreams "Shoot the Moon"		ESPNs	Headline News	CNN Sunday Night		Seinfeld "The Tricent"	Judge Judy
5:00	Sesame Street (E)	(2:11) Movie ***** "The Suburban" (1980) Comedy: Gary Burkin, Amy Brenneman.	Headline News	Access Hollywood	CNN Presents	SportsCenter (Live)	BreathinSpace Yoga	Access Hollywood
6:30	Barney & Friends (E)		Headline News	(2:25) Guiding Light			Caribbean Workout	(2:25) Guiding Light
6:30	Blue's Clues (E)		ESPNs	(1:31) General Hospital	Larry King Live		Top Story	(1:31) General Hospital
7:00	Dragon Tales (E)	Revealed "Mike Myers" Mike Myers	Meet Me on Sesame	Larry King Live	Play Your World with Neil Cavuto	NFL Primetime	TIPICAL MARY ELLEN	The View
7:30	Bob the Builder		Beat in the Big Blue House				The View	Aladdin
8:00	The Wiggles "Friends"	Hollywood Backstories	Little Bear	Mucha Lucha	Hannity & Colmes	SportsCenter	Emeril Live	Mucha Lucha
8:30	Dora the Explorer	Dora the Explorer	Dr. Phil	Street of Fortune	Mary Kate and Ashley			Kim Possible
9:00	Stanley "Mockingbird Scat"	Movie "Dancing at the Harvest Moon" (2002) Drama: Jacqueline Bisset, Valerie Harper.	Dr. Phil	Jeopardy!	The Bellway Boys	SportsCenter	30-Minute Meals	Jeopardy!
10:00	Arthur (E)		Headline News	Headline News	FOX News Watch	College Basketball: Arizona at Arizona State. (Live)	Paula's Home Cooking	Headline News
10:30	Reading Rainbow (E)	(1:43) Movie ***** "The Silence of the Lambs" (1991)	(3:45) Guiding Light	Advisory Block	Builds and Bears		Designer's Challenge	ESPNs
11:00	Stanley	Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins. A mad genius helps an FBI agent pursue a serial killer.	(1:71) General Hospital	Access Block	Conan on Business	The Soup	Fashion Emergency	AFN Evening News
12:00	Dora the Explorer		Headline News	Without a Trace 'a Tree Falls'	Fox and Friends	SportsCenter	The King of Queens	80 Minutes
12:30	The Wiggles "Your Body"	Judge Judy	Judge Judy	Without a Trace 'a Tree Falls'	Dateline NBC		That '70s Show	Without a Trace 'a Tree Falls'
13:00	Bob the Builder	Movie ***** "The American President" (1995) Michael Douglas, Annette Bening. U.S. president risks his political future for love.	Today Patricia Arquette, Sutton Foster	Today 3:00 AM - 6:00 AM CTU gains the upper hand.	Fox and Friends	College Basketball: Wake Forest at Virginia. (Live)	Charm'd	CTU "You're the Upper Hand"
13:30	Blue's Clues		Pacific Report	Pacific Report	Fox and Friends		ER	Pacific Report
14:00	Barney & Friends (E)		The Tonight Show	The Tonight Show			Ally McBeal "In Search of a Hero"	The Tonight Show
15:00	Funtastic Home Videos	(5:59) Movie ***** "Rush Hour" (1999) Jackie Chan, Chris Tucker. Two detectives put to test in a kidnapping case.	Aladdin	Aladdin	American Morning	College Basketball: Clemson at Duke. (Live)	Any Day Now	Late Show
16:00	Fut Hoose		ChalkZone (E)	ChalkZone (E)	CNN Live Today		ER	The Night and Day
16:30	Pokeyman "Sara Corghorn"		Kim Possible (E)	Kim Possible (E)			Law & Order "Tabula Rasa"	Access Hollywood
17:00	Rocky Power		Headline News	Headline News		SportsCenter	The Simpsons	The Late Show
17:30	The Family 60/Parents		The Family 60/Parents	The Family 60/Parents	FOX News		Everybody Loves Raymond	Dennis Miller
18:00	Rugrats		Headline News	Headline News	NBA Fastbreak	Dateline NBC "Diana Harewood" (Part 1 of 2)	Countdown with Keith Olbermann	Countdown with Keith Olbermann
19:00	Little McGuire "First Kiss"		AFN Evening News	Dennis Miller	College GameDay	Dateline NBC "Diana Harewood" (Part 2 of 2)	Entertainment Studios.com	Entertainment Studios.com
19:30	Taina "Papi Don't Preach"		Without a Trace 'a Tree Falls'	Without a Trace 'a Tree Falls'	PGA Golf	American Idol Round "Alumabab 5"	NFL Monday Quarterback	NFL Monday Quarterback
20:30	Smallville "Crush"						Friends	Headline News
21:00	Boy Meets World	(2:15) Movie ***** "The Last Battalion" (2001) Drama: Rick Schroder, Adam Hicks, Adam Kotz.	Headline News	Good Morning America	Today 3:00 AM - 6:00 AM CTU gains the upper hand.	NFL Primetime	Pardon the Interruption	Good Morning America
22:30	Home Improvement		The Tonight Show	The Tonight Show	Lester Holt Live	Around the Horn	Scandal "The Wager"	Scandal "The Wager"
23:00	Yours Truly by an Angel "Perfect Little Angel"	Movie ***** "Passenger 57" (1992) Wesley Snipes.	Late Show	Late Show		Pardon the Interruption	Blind Date	Blind Date

SPECIAL TO STARS AND STRIPES

Walter Scott's Personality PARADE®

Want the facts? Opinions? Truth? Write Walter Scott, Box 5001, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10163-5001. Full name will be used unless otherwise requested. Volume of mail makes personal replies impossible.

Q Why the confusion over who was the most frequent guest — Steve Martin, Rodney Dangerfield or Tony Randall — when Johnny Carson hosted "The Tonight Show," 1962-92? Can't the show's producer count? — Don Davidson, Overland Park, Kan.

A Jeff Sotzing, Johnny's nephew and head of Carson Entertainment, tells us: "The exact number will never be known. The tapes from the first decade were erased because no one imagined they'd be so valuable one day." Sotzing's records for 1972-92 put Randall in the lead, with 67.

Q Critics of the CIA's new head, Porter Goss, say he unfairly blames the spy agency for failures in Iraq that were caused, in fact, by political pressure from the Bush White House. Do you agree with those critics? — Konrad Perlman, Washington, D.C.

A No. The CIA's wrong data on Saddam's weapons of mass destruction and the post-war Iraqi resistance were failures of intelligence-gathering and analysis that can't be explained by political pressure. The spy agency has long been in need of a thorough shake-up, and Porter Goss deserves a chance to do it.

Q I was sad to hear of the retirement of one of my heroines, Sherry Lansing, who became the first female chairman of a major studio when she joined Paramount in 1982. What are her future plans? — Norma Ryder, Portland, Ore.

A "A year is left on my contract," says Lansing, 60. "Then I want to devote myself to philanthropic work in education and health care. It may sound corny, but I want to make the world a better place." Doesn't sound corny to us.

Q I heard that Beyoncé's kid sister, Solange, gave birth at 18. True? — Amelia Harris, Birmingham, Ala.

A Yes. Solange gave birth to Daniel Julez J. Smith in October. Her new hubby, Daniel Smith, 20, played football for Texas Southern. Reps for Solange, who released an album in 2003, say it's unclear when she'll resume her career. For now, sounds like papa/manager Mathew Knowles will have to settle for one diva in the family.



Beyoncé's little sister, Solange, performs in 2003, before she became a teen mother.



Jesse Metcalfe and Eva Longoria star on the hit ABC series "Desperate Housewives," which tells a darker tale about the goings-on of the typical suburban neighborhood. Typical if all the women on the street are drop-dead gorgeous, that is.

AP

Q What's your take on the red-hot ABC series "Desperate Housewives," starring Teri Hatcher and Nicolette Sheridan? — Ron Douglas, Petaluma, Calif.

A We're not fans of the prime-time soap, which glamorizes infidelity and promiscuity in the suburbs.

Q I enjoyed your Andrews Sisters item. Which brings up a question: What's happened to the Lennon Sisters? — L. Gann, Langhorne, Pa.

A "Peggy and Dianne retired, but Kathy, Janet and another sister, Mimi, perform in Branson, Mo., at the Welk Resort," says brother Bill Lennon. Their dad was killed by a deranged fan in 1969. Their mom remarried in 1998 at age 80.

Q How do you think Julia Roberts' twins will adjust to the names Phinnaeus and Hazel? — Karen Harada, Hilo, Hawaii

A It's hard enough being the children of celebrities without being saddled with oddball names.

Q Alfred Lunt and his wife, Lynn Fontanne, were the reigning acting couple from the '20s through the '50s. Is there a couple today that matches their legendary standing? — Barbara Delchmann, Lake Forest, Calif.

A Yes. Paul Newman, 79, and Joanne Woodward, 74. "They've acted in 10 films together, from 'The Long Hot Summer' (1958) to 'Mr. & Mrs. Bridge' (1990). And next spring they'll appear in the film 'Empire Falls' on HBO. In addition, Newman has directed his wife in four feature films.



Q Did the DUI arrest of Olympic swim champ Michael Phelps affect his lucrative endorsement deals? — Gina J., Lake Forest, Ill.

A So far, sponsors such as PowerBar, Speedo and Visa — and his fans — have been supportive. Michael, 19, was arrested in November in Maryland on four charges, including driving while impaired. He apologized and was scheduled to appear in court last week. Far from being washed up, the Michigan freshman expects to reach his prime for the 2008 Olympics.

SH

Swimmer Michael Phelps poses in those innocent, pre-2004 Olympics days of yore.

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STARS AND STRIPES

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Accept Christmas traditions

In response to several recent letters, I think those serving with me in the Middle East can verify that there are few snow-covered spruce, reindeer, or houghs of holly in the areas near where Christianity started. When Christianity spread into northern Europe, early Christians couldn't keep the local holiday (a celebration of the winter solstice) from being celebrated as it had been for years, so they just accepted it and incorporated it into their own belief system.

While one has the right to voice objections to Christmas being celebrated, my recommendation would be to leave it to the way early Christians did — keep your beliefs and accept the holiday as it's celebrated currently.

Merry (belated) Christmas!

Air Force Maj. Andrew Hray

Tallit Air Base, Iraq

Religion, science can coexist

The writer of the Dec. 9 letter "Evolution is still a theory" states "evolution is still a theory," as creationism is another theory," and describes herself as "educated on the theory of evolution." She obviously did not learn about evolution from a science class. Evolution is a "theory" like other "theories": electricity, continental drift, relativity and the "theory" that the Earth orbits the Sun. A theory is not a guess, it is a statement that best fits the evidence, is supported by observation and experiment, and is accepted by experts as fact.

And the evidence for evolution is overwhelming. Are there "disconnects"? Sure. That's what makes science fun; that's what drives research. Science is not written in stone, it changes as the evidence changes. This is one of its strengths but, somehow, some see it as a weakness.

Grouping a series of contradictions and calling it a theory is not science. Creationism is the scientific equivalent of a child saying "No it isn't!" If you choose to believe in creationism, that's great. But don't insult the rest of us by trying to masquerade it as scientific theory. And please spare us the retorts that quote "sci-

Tell us what you think

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entists" who espouse creationism. True "critical thinkers" can easily see holes in creationist speculations.

Hundreds of years ago, Galileo Galilei endorsed the idea that the Earth circled the sun, not vice versa. This was seen as a threat by the church, and he was imprisoned. Now we know the truth, and it is not interpreted as a threat to our religious beliefs. Today, we don't imprison our scientists, we imprison our children in a fortress of ignorance that teaches things like creationism as science. Religion and science need not compete. They can coexist comfortably, as they do in the minds and hearts of scientists all over the world.

Air Force Maj. David Duval

Ramstein Air Base, Germany

New theory: Intelligent design

I read the letter "Evolution more than 'theory'" (Dec. 10) with great interest. The writer is quite right in her description of "theory." In technical usage, the evolutionary model is an established explanation for the origins of the world in which we live. Ironically, it is not a very good theory by that definition.

More and more scientists, religious or not, are expressing doubts about this theory. Advances in the fields of astrophysics, geology and biochemistry have

added credibility to the theory that this cosmos is the product of intelligent design. From the delicate balance of our world to support life, to the irreducible complexity of the basic building blocks of life, many are willing to consider an explanation that involves something other than purely naturalistic causes. And many of the so-called proofs of an evolutionary hypothesis that have been accepted for three generations are being found to be untenable in the light of recent discoveries.

Evolution and intelligent design are both theories in the technical sense. The latter is the better explanation of the preponderance of the data. But don't say that too loudly, someone might accuse you of being religious.

Dan Taylor

Baghdad

All troops ensure our freedoms

To U.S. servicemen:

My family and I wanted to send a very heartfelt thank you to all of you serving this great country. The importance of what you do is especially evident during this time of year, when we're able to gather with our families and count our blessings.

We realize that the luxury of being with our loved ones comes with a cost that you're paying. We are so grateful for being able to sleep in warm beds at night, snuggle our children to sleep, and watch with anticipation as they open their Christmas presents.

While my family is able to enjoy all of these wonderful gifts and many more, you're working around the clock in all sorts of conditions, sometimes stationed far from your family and loved ones. You affect so many aspects of our lives, and we take many of them for granted. The protection you grant us is worth more than any tangible gift. We want you to know that your sacrifices are not going unnoticed.

So for everybody from the guards who protect our gates to the soldiers putting their lives on the line to protect freedom, thank you and happy holidays.

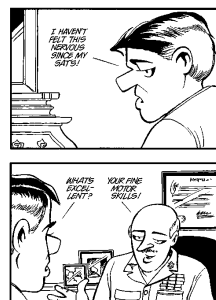
Kristi Dix

RAF Daws Hill, England

DOONESBURY



by G.B. Trudeau



OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Reservists treated unfairly
The Repository, Canton, Ohio

For six Ohio reservists convicted of taking parts from abandoned Army vehicles so they could complete a mission in Iraq, the punishment far exceeds the crime. Soldiers who have been in combat will tell you that desperate times call for desperate measures. If those measures include taking parts from an unused vehicle in order for hours to function, so be it.

The reservists, who were given six months in prison and dishonorable discharges, were in a no-win situation. Had they failed to carry out their mission, they would have been court-martialed for dereliction of duty.

U.S. Sens. Mike DeWine of Ohio and Dick Durbin of Illinois, and no less an expert on combat than Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, commander of the allied forces in Iraq, are asking the Army to reconsider. The military is right to expect troops to follow proper procedure, but the letter of the law can't always be upheld during war.

Taser's poor record shocking
Florida Daily, Melbourne

The public arms police with stun guns because it wants to give officers a nonlethal edge over out-of-control suspects. Not every suspect shot with 50,000 volts from a Taser, however, has been out of control. Some have been in custody when repeated shocks ended their deaths.

Amnesty International has documented 74 Taser-related deaths nationwide since 1994, and asked police to stop using the guns until they can prove them safe. Taser International of Scottsdale, Ariz., blames other factors and backs medical examiners except when they contradict the company's position.

Meanwhile, more than 5,000 police departments own Tasers. In November, the Transportation Security Administration said the device could be used aboard commercial airliners.

... When they work, Tasers save lives ... The technology, however, is new to know for sure what effect it has on the heart, particularly when drugs are involved. Studies should continue, and departments should review Taser guidelines.

Tasers are supposed to be better than guns. But if they kill when police believe they to be harmless, they are worse than guns.

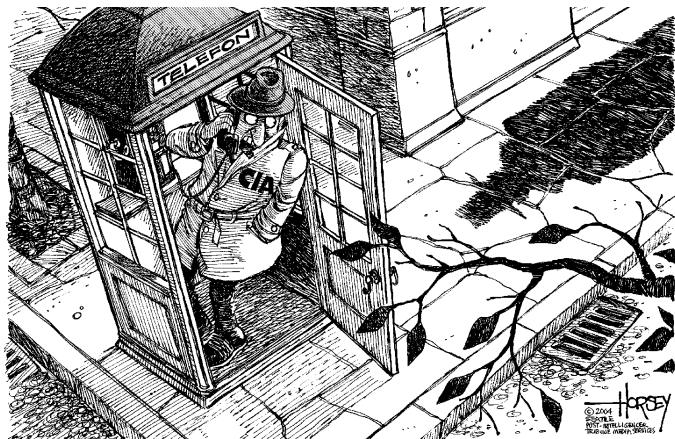
Lack of warning cost lives
Los Angeles Times

Though it happened on the other side of the world, news of a killer tsunami striking two continents should be seen by Californians as a fundamentally local story. Our home, planet Earth, is seriously flawed.

The tsunami ... underscores how global disasters can exacerbate even natural disasters. It reminds us that many of the people living in its path were have-nots in more ways than one, as they lacked the advance notice that scientists as far away as Alaska and Hawaii had received about what was about to hit them.

There isn't likely to be a 12/26 commission, nor should we pretend that such calamities can be avoided. Questions must be asked about the lack of preparedness. Indonesia was too close to the epicenter to benefit much from an early warning, but a few hours of notice could have saved many lives in India and Sri Lanka.

Expect plenty of debate over whether the tsunami should prompt the building of a comprehensive early warning system. A more sensible approach may be to simply expand the Pacific monitoring system and



"MY COVER'S BLOWN! THEY'RE CLOSING IN!.... NO, NOT AL-QAIDA, IT'S THOSE GUYS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE!"

build up emergency mobilization programs in South Asian nations that could be used to respond to a wide variety of calamities.

Right tack can curb drug use
The Times-Picayune, New Orleans

More teenagers are turning their backs on cigarettes and illicit drugs, according to a federal study that looked at 8th-, 10th- and 12th-graders, and the decline in use is certainly encouraging.

But despite these positive trends, there's troubling data in the study that was done by the University of Michigan for the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The use of inhalants, such as glues and aerosols, increased in 2004 after groups after years of decline. The survey showed a slight increase in under-drinking among older teens, and the drug Oxycontin was one of the only illegal substances that showed an increase in use.

While the high cost of cigarettes and stricter marketing controls get some of the credit, anti-smoking ads have had an impact, too. Nearly three-fourths of the 12th-graders surveyed this year said that they would prefer not to date a smoker — up from a third in 1977.

If young people can be persuaded not to light up because of the risk of cancer, emphysema and heart disease, it's clear that more needs to be done to educate them about the considerable risk involved in using inhalants.

Learn from tsunami disaster
The Daytona (Fla.) Beach News-Journal

So many deaths. So much devastation. So little warning.

Aid is already pouring into areas affected by the giant waves that smashed into the coastlines of nine countries along the Indian Ocean. Much more will be needed. For every thousand death, authorities say, there are thousands more who have lost their homes and every possession.

The United States is contributing to early relief efforts, and should do more. Donations also are pouring in through the American Red Cross' International Response Fund.

But even as the immediate needs are met, the world's leaders should take stock of the early warning system for natural disasters around the globe.

The only international warning system currently operates in the Pacific Ocean.

That system detected the underground quake that triggered the tsunami, but frantic attempts to warn affected countries failed because there was no formal system of notification. Officials in some areas — such as Thailand — knew of the underwater earthquakes but didn't know about the giant waves they spawned.

Over the coming weeks and months, hundreds of billions of dollars in aid will flow to countries devastated by the tsunami. But even as they plan to assist with disaster relief, nations should consider investing in a system that could help to prevent such tragedy in the future.

Bipartisanship: A capital idea
The Post-Standard, Syracuse, N.Y.

"I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it," President Bush said in his postelection news conference.

The question is, how will Bush spend that capital, and how far it will go?

So it was surprising to see the White House last [month] poke a stick in the eye of congressional Democrats. Bush announced he would resubmit the names of 20 judicial candidates whom the Democrats had blocked during his first term.

That's Bush's prerogative, of course. But is this the wisest use of political capital? Consider the response of Sen. Charles Schumer, the New York Democrat who will be front and center during confirmation hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee. "In this opening shot, the White House is making it clear that they are not interested in bipartisanship when it comes to nominating judges."

Merely sending these judicial nominees back for another review may have cost Bush some of his political capital. Drawn-out fights to push one or more of them through to confirmation could quickly drain his account.

Know each area's EMT needs
Grand Forks (N.D.) Herald

The situation is this, the Herald and The Associated Press have reported: A national committee is revisiting the rules for licensing emergency medical technicians. The committee has useful ideas for beefing up and standardizing EMT training, adding such skills as injecting epinephrine to people suffering severe allergic reactions.

The trouble is that the new curriculum

could more than double the time EMTs must train to get certified, the story reported.

Currently, EMTs need 110 hours of training to get their initial certification.

And volunteers already are hard to come by, ambulance personnel in rural North Dakota and elsewhere reported. If the requirement jumps to 200-plus hours, the task will be extremely difficult or even impossible, they predicted.

They have a point. This situation fulfills the classic saying, "The perfect is the enemy of the good." The good in this case is the way things are right now; volunteer EMTs in rural areas can't do everything, but they can stabilize most patients by rendering basic first aid and transporting them to the hospital. That will change if would-be volunteers are scared off by the training requirements.

The proposed rule sounds great for professional firefighters and others who get paid for their work and some of the training they undertake. But it shouldn't apply to rural areas if it will make things worse rather than better.

It's no secret: Sources help
Herald-Journal, Spartanburg, S.C.

Across the nation, reporters are being questioned about confidential sources and even being threatened with jail.

Two reporters have been convicted of contempt of court for refusing to reveal their sources about an investigation into how the White House compromised the identity of a CIA operative.

In several places around the nation, federal authorities are subpoenaing reporters and threatening them with incarceration unless they reveal the identities of sources to whom they had promised confidentiality.

What's at stake is the ability of the public to learn what the government is doing and the ability of the news media to uncover corruption at all levels of government and society.

Many, if not most, of the scandals that have been uncovered by the media have been started by unnamed sources. Someone close to the scandal is fed up with what his cronies are doing. He tells a reporter and begs that reporter to keep his identity secret. The reporter complies.

This process is necessary to uncovering the stories that let citizens know where things are going on, particularly when government or business officials do things they shouldn't.

Sunday Horoscope

It's a day to "make nice" — especially if all the hottheaded energy zinging around lately has caused you to accidentally "make mean." With the Capricorn sun urging us to get ahead and other planets in Sagittarius lighting a fire under that spirit, it's easy to be hasty or harsh. The Libra moon gives us just the right words to use in our apology.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(January 2). When it comes to relationships, you're just plain lucky. It's an incredible year for advancement in your house of marriage and other partnerships if you're willing to fully embrace change. Next month, experiment with new approaches to old problems. Serious soul searching serves you well in February. Love signs are Cancer and Virgo.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Your mind has a conversation with itself. This doesn't mean you are crazy; it means you are sorting things through. You'll be pressured to make a decision but should not until you have absolutely no hesitation about doing so.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Everyone is, to some degree, addicted to suffering — even you. Be aware of the signal you're sending to someone near that it's OK to vent frustrations on you. When it's no longer OK with you, he or she will stop.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

The stars support you in developing a rich fantasy world. Liberate your imagination. If you don't keep a journal, this is the day to start. Write as though you never intend another soul to read it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Procrastination is a self-imposed limitation that undermines your finances, love life and personal growth. You feel like giving in to distraction and excuses. Have someone you respect hold you to your word.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

You're entrusted with an important decision because others see you as

wise and smart. Money tip: Use any extra funds you have to buy, fix or manufacture something you can resell.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

The sensual elements of a life pop out at you in vivid detail — a sign of your improving heart.

Holiday Mathis

Since you're the resident bon vivant, teach loved ones how to either prepare or appreciate a fine meal.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

The stars offer you a sense of oneness — the only caveat being: you must drop your need to be a "special" case. Seeing the similarities instead of differences between people is healing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

You're recognizing new emotions. Your feelings for a certain earth sign (Taurus, Virgo or Capricorn) are somewhere between tender affection and romantic attraction. Beware of a sharp-tongued woman.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

(From the outside, life looks much as it did yesterday, but internally, you're different. Brilliant thoughts are likely to pop into your mind during an evening activity, such as taking a shower or brushing your teeth.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Education is highlighted — not the days you were in school, though. While someone else was engaged in formal learning, you were taking lessons at the school of hard knocks. Both ways are valid. Give yourself credit.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Let nothing stop you from thriving now. You may find that despite your brio and wit you are unable to sway loved ones to join you. Some journeys are better savored alone.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

You'll engage in your own version of building sand castles. Endeavors that are beautiful because of their temporal nature please your intellect. However, this does not include vivid conversations that go nowhere.

Creators Syndicate

Pronunciation of 'poinsettia'

My wife and I call those beautiful and white flowers that so wonderfully symbolize Christmas "poinsett-as." Our know-it-all college freshman daughter, however, insists that our pronunciation is wrong, and that we should be saying "poinsett-ee." Well, I don't know anyone who says "poinsett-ee" and I feel funny saying "poinsett-ee" too.

Yes, there are commentators who, like your daughter, decry the "ee" pronunciation of "poinsettia," and could acceptable all of the "tee" pronunciation, which, of course, more accurately reflects the word's spelling. But

you're right: the "ee" pronunciation is at least as common as the prescribed pronunciation, and in fact appears to be the choice of most current speakers.

We also have abundant backing for a pronunciation in which a "t" is added to the first syllable, making it sound like "point."

According to our evidence, all of these variations are established, and you shouldn't feel at all funny saying "poinsett-ee," most other people are saying it too.

This column was prepared by the editors of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition. Readers may send questions to Merriam-Webster's Wordwatch, P.O. Box 261, 47 Federal St., Springfield, Mass. 01102.

Vandalism of van turns into war of words with neighbors

Dear Abby: I may have started a war with my neighbors.

About two months ago, their son "Ricky" smashed a brick on my van while it was parked in my driveway. The damage was estimated at more than \$500. I asked Ricky's parents to pay for it because I had paid them \$100 a few months before, after I accidentally ran over their game they were playing. They said I should take that to court — so that's exactly what I'm doing.

After they were served with the court papers, they called my boss and complained that I had cut them off while driving my company vehicle, a school bus. It was an outright lie. Things are starting to get out of hand. Am I wrong for wanting my van fixed?

Dear Frustrated: Of course not. If you haven't already done so, write to your boss immediately and explain exactly what is going on. Then inform the police

about the boy's act of vandalism to your van. You didn't start a war. Your neighbors did when they refused to make good on the damage their son caused.

P.S. Now that you know the kid is trouble, keep your daughter away from him.

Dear Abby



Dear Abby: I am a 14-year-old girl who recently found out that I am the daughter of a sperm donor. I had always thought my father had died and no one would tell me why.

Now I feel unloved by whoever is my father. It scares me to think I may have brothers or sisters out there, and that he may not care that I exist. I don't understand why it's legal to just donate when a child may be born. Is there any way I can find out about my "real" father — or any advice you can give me?

— Doesn't Understand in Pennsylvania

Dear Doesn't Understand: The person who donated his sperm so that you could be conceived thought he was doing a noble deed — helping a couple who desperately wanted a child but were unable to do so. As far as I know, there is no way to trace his identity.

Shon's wife far too attached to family to be good spouse

Dear Annie: Three months ago, our son married a 34-year-old girl, "Lena." Lena is obsessively attached to her family and is not being a wife to our son. She has refused to consummate the marriage, although she wanted a big wedding and professed to love him.

Lena drives to her parents' house every day on her way to work and eats breakfast with them. She stops back for lunch. She usually goes there on the weekends as well and talks to her mother constantly on the phone. She even showers and does her laundry at her parents' home.

It seems to me that Lena cannot accept the fact that she is married and has new responsibilities. She has cooked only three meals in three months. My son buys all the groceries and has cooked all the other meals.

Lena seems desperately enmeshed with her family, and they are allowing her dependency to continue. She suffers from numerous fears and anxieties. She refuses to be alone in our son's house and is never there to greet him when he comes home from work. Our son is no longer the fun, outgoing person he used to be. He is dreadfully sad. We see little hope for this

marriage, but he continues to believe that somehow Lena will change.

— Desperate Parents

Dear Parents: We know how hard it is to see your child unhappy. We also assume your son is confiding in you because you know a great many intimate

details about his marriage. Nonetheless, you need to step aside. The best thing you can do for your son is urge him to seek counseling, with or without Lena, and decide if the marriage can be improved, and if not, what the best course of action would be.

Whatever he chooses, please be supportive without judging his situation or his wife.

Dear Annie: As a Catholic, I have been baffled by the hand-shaking that goes on during Mass. I always have found it unhygienic to shake hands with others, and then with those same hands receive communion.

However, since the flu season is upon us, our church has suggested that instead of shaking hands, parishioners wish their neighbors peace verbally. I'm hoping and urging the Catholic Church to adopt this new idea permanently. It's much safer and healthier.

Annie's Mailbox



Dear Abby: I am a 30-year-old woman who was recently widowed. Although my new status is painful, I feel that because I am no longer married, I may take back my maiden name. My dilemma stems from the fact that I receive a pension from my husband's company, and others have told me that if I don't consider myself married, that I shouldn't accept his pension.

Are they right? Is this disrespectful to my deceased husband? Am I being selfish? I don't want to upset my in-laws. Hurting and disrespecting anyone is the last thing I want to do.

— Confused in Ohio

Dear Confused: As a widow, you are entitled to call yourself either by your married name or your maiden name.

The choice is yours.

As a widow, you have a right to receive your husband's pension benefits until they run out. I don't know who gave you the bad advice you repeated to me, but that person is mistaken. To accept the money and go on with your life is neither selfish nor disrespectful.

Letters to this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 4940, Los Angeles, CA 90008. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.anniesmailbox.com/dearabby> or a Universal Press Syndicate.

— Trying To Be a Good Neighbor on the East Coast

Dear East Coast: Hands transmit a tremendous number of germs, although the act of shaking someone's hand provides a sense of community and bonding that a verbal expression cannot match.

Parishioners who are concerned about getting sick this season might try to matter with their parish priest.

Dear Annie: My fiancé and I are planning the guest list for our wedding. We both come from huge families, and the list is already quite large. We are in our 30s, and many of our friends already are married with children.

We would like to limit the children to immediate family only. Please suggest a tactful way to notify the other guests that children are not allowed.

— A Frequent Fiance

Dear Fiance: If the children's names are not on the invitation, it means they are not invited. Please make it clear that you wish to bring their children anyway should be told, "Sorry, but we are limiting children to the immediate family."

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marc Sugar, longtime editors of the Am Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

RELIGION

'Passion' essay challenged interfaith ideas



GOLDHIRSH FAMILY/AP

Elizabeth Goldhirsh sits with her late father, Bernie Goldhirsh. Elizabeth, the 25-year-old heiress to a magazine fortune and graduate student at Harvard Divinity School, said she created a religious essay contest with a top prize of \$25,000 for young people to counter the negative debate surrounding the film "The Passion of the Christ."

BY LOUISE CHU
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Shuffling between classes at Emory University's Candler School of Theology, Adam Meredith-Ployd saw an intriguing opportunity to apply what he'd learned in his studies on the history of Christians and Jews — an opportunity worth \$25,000.

Following Mel Gibson's film "The Passion of the Christ," which drew criticism that it contained destructive Christian stereotypes of Jews, an essay contest had been founded to promote understanding between the two faiths.

"It highlighted a conflict that can be invisible in a lot of ways," said Meredith-Ployd, a 22-year-old Christian graduate student whose essay took the top award last month. "I think what 'Passion' brought out is there's still residual issues between Christians and Jews that are 2,000 years old."

The contest's founder, 25-year-old magazine heiress Elizabeth Goldhirsh, said she created the competition for people 16 to 22 in the wake of the movie; the aim was to try to develop some interfaith unity within the younger generation.

"Unfortunately, we've grown up with so many leaders on TV using religion for very negative purposes," said Goldhirsh, who is Jewish. "When you think about other religions, you think about conflict rather than what brings everyone together."

Goldhirsh, a Harvard Divinity School graduate student and daughter of the late Inc. magazine founder Bernie Goldhirsh, said she offered a large prize package — a total of \$100,000 — was awarded, making it one of the most lucrative writing contests in the nation — to attract interest in the issue.

The strategy worked.

Four thousand entries came in, though what they showed was a surprising lack of familiarity with building interfaith relationships in general, said the Rev. Christopher Leighton, executive director of the Baltimore-based Institute of Christian & Jewish Studies and one of the contest's judges.

The problem, Leighton said, was that many of the entrants — particularly Christians — thought the answer was to make the other side see the error of its ways, rather than to promote respect for differing theological points of view.

Organizers found that many of the entrants "haven't developed the ability to cross a border to comprehend the religious sensibilities of their neighbors," Leighton said. "The essay contest confirmed how much work needs to be done."

That finding doesn't surprise Eboo Patel, founder and executive director of the Chicago-based Interfaith Youth Core, one of the only interfaith groups in the nation focused on young people.

"Although there's lots of good interfaith work being done in the world, very few of them involve young people," Patel said.

"They're always the top picture of [the] newsletter but the bottom priority on the budget."

Patel said he's been working to raise awareness of interfaith issues through high school religious forums and national volunteer days that bring together young people of different faiths to do community service projects. The movement is "in its total infancy," but "the U.S. is going to have to come to terms with being a multi-faith society," he said.

"It is an enormously sensitive area," said Patel, a Muslim. "People's relationship with God is the single most precious thing that they have."

In the contest-winning essay, Meredith-Ployd found common ground in Christians' and Jews' view of time, based on the Bible's account of the seven-day creation of the world in Genesis.

"At the heart of both these ethics is the resounding declaration that God's reality is not the world's reality," Meredith-Ployd wrote.

The Institute of Christian & Jewish Studies has designed a fellowship program for 12 of the contest finalists to continue their study of interfaith issues.

"We need to move from symbols to substance, in abstraction," Leighton said. "Ultimately, what holds power is the ways in which people express and embody their religious values and commitments."

Turks careful in following path of Muslim leader

Fethullah Gulen is thought by some to have the answer for merging Islamic and Western cultures in Turkey

BY BRIAN MURPHY
The Associated Press

ISTANBUL, Turkey — There doesn't seem to be much separating the politics of secular Turkey's leaders and an Islamic-oriented movement built around a preacher, author and mystic scholar named Fethullah Gulen.

Both promote Western-style enterprise and education. They denounce Muslim radicals and agree on Turkey's main goal: European Union membership.

So why has Gulen moved into self-exile in the United States after facing charges of seeking an Islamic-style regime in his homeland? The answer is murky, and reaches deep into Turkey's history-shaping drive to bring more than 70 million Muslims into Europe's inner circle.

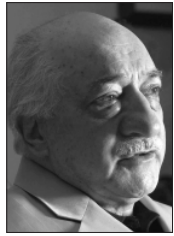
"This is a kind of culture clash," said John Esposito, a Georgetown University expert on Islam who has studied the Gulen community. "For certain secular-minded Turks, they believe in

their bones that religion is backward and holds back society. Gulen is seen as offering a way to merge the two."

The ailing, 66-year-old Gulen — who's been described as a cross between missionary, mogul and freelance diplomat — says Turks can embrace Islam, Western values and nationalism. But he adds a twist that collides with Turkey's secular codes: Islamic culture and perspectives should be given equal weight and freedom of expression alongside Western-leaning views.

His teachings are not widely known outside Turkish circles — but that could change. Gulen's ideas may increasingly enter the debate during a long and pivotal period for the Muslim world: EU membership talks with Turkey scheduled to begin in October.

Gulen's supporters lead a strategic spectrum of media voices: a national television channel, more than a half-dozen radio stations, the Cihan news agency and one of



Philosopher, author and leader of an Islamic-oriented movement in Turkey, Fethullah Gulen.

Turkey's largest newspapers, Zaman. Each has good access to Gulen — who rarely gives interviews — and provides forums for his views.

But the backbone of the Gulen

fellowship is its highly regarded elementary and high schools — more than 500 concentrated in Turkey and ethnically linked parts of Central Asia, with other sites from New York to China. Gulen's supporters also run six universities.

It's difficult to assess the number of dedicated followers of Gulen's teachings because there is no central organization and no clear picture of his network's inner financial workings.

But already tens of thousands of students have gone through the schools, and the Gulen-inspired media reaches millions each day.

Gulen, who sometimes lives in a Turkish-American compound in Stroudsburg, Pa., was too ill from diabetes and other ailments to respond to questions from The Associated Press, said aide Kemal Ozer.

Other "friends" of the movement declined to provide financial details, but claimed each entity is independent and linked only by an attraction to Gulen's philosophy.

Some Turkish officials still believe he has crossed into territory reserved for the state. His international religious meetings have included a 1998 audience with Pope John Paul II. His movement also runs academic and policy conferences, including one in early December in Brussels on Turkey's EU aspirations.

"We don't have any political goals," insisted Cemaal Uysal, vice president of the Istanbul-based Journalists and Writers' Foundation that helps organize Gulen-related events.

"But some groups in Turkey see anything with growing power in a suspicious way."

The state turned its worries into an indictment, accusing Gulen of quietly plotting an Islamic kingdom by gaining followers in high places and "brainwashing" school children.

In March 2003, Gulen was cleared under an amnesty but he has been under watch for his commitment in the United States in 1999. He has no immediate plans to return, he told Turkish media.

YOUR MONEY



The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas are crowded with shoppers Dec. 17. High-end luxury shopping has become a tourist attraction for visits to Las Vegas, especially during the holidays.

Stores bringing more temptation to Sin City

BY CHRISTINA ALMEIDA
The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Just before a luxury shopping mall opened at Caesars Palace in 1992, the mall's marketing director, Maureen Crampton, stood behind the closed doors and thought to herself, "I do hope somebody is on the other side."

She need not have worried. More than a decade later, The Forum Shops is one of the most successful malls in the country, and high-end shopping has become one of the biggest pastimes in America's gambling capital.

Gucci, Prada and Dior are now neighbors along a gilded stretch of the Bellagio hotel-casino. Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue and Nordstrom anchor the expansive Fashion Show mall farther down the Las Vegas Strip. And boutiques like Burberry, Mikimoto and Jimmy Choo are inside the Venetian hotel-casino.

"Shopping has become an incredible part of the allure of Las Vegas," said Hal Rothman, Las Vegas historian and author.

About 36 million tourists visit the city each year. A recent survey by MRC Group Research Institute found that nearly as many visitors said they shopped (63 per-

cent) as gambled (69 percent) during their stay. Tourists spent an estimated \$2.9 billion shopping last year.

Casino executives discovered that allowing customers to wander away from the gambling floor might be good for business — as long as they kept spending their money on the property.

Guests can now pamper themselves with a \$165 facial, dine on a \$60 Kobe beef burger and buy a \$1,570 Christian Dior handbag without ever going across the street.

"Shopping is one chance for the casinos to recapture some of the money they paid out to the winners," said Keith Scherer, director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "If you have millions of people visiting, walking by, all you have to do is capture a small percentage of them to be profitable."

The Forum Shops, where a three-story spiral escalator whisks customers high above the Italian marble flooring, produced average annual sales of \$1,471 per square foot in October. That is well above the industry's national average of \$345 in 2003.

SEE VEGAS ON PAGE 23

Previewing military move should cut down on costs

"Susie Besaw, from the book 'The Savvy Sailor's Spouse,' is new to the military lifestyle but is eager to learn more about how to manage her family and her new lifestyle through the monthly Family Readiness Group meetings of her husband Jake's new command. Editor's note: This is the final installment from 'The Savvy Sailor's Spouse.'"

At our December Family Readiness Group meeting Laurie came to the front and began: "The purpose of this hour-long presentation is to help you understand the basic finances of a military move. Don't expect to be an expert on the military move when I'm done. It takes time and effort to do it right."

"Once you have your paperwork, work with your PFSO representative to figure out what your moving allowances will be. Then, work backward to figure out how much the moving experience is going to cost you."

"Remember, the goal is to make the move cost as close to nothing for you as possible. Planning is the only way to make sure that happens."

"There are six basic sources of moving income from the govern-

ment when moving with INCONUS.

Money U.

The biggest is the Dislocation Allowance, or DLA. It is usually a multiple of your BAH.

"Next is your Monetary Allowance for Transportation, or MALT. MALT is a reimbursement for driving your car to your new duty station. Be sure to use the Official Military Table of Distances when calculating it."

"Your spouse is allowed a flat \$50 Per Diem Allowance based on driving 350 miles per day. You and your children also receive a per diem that is a percentage of your spouse's rate."

"If you don't take house-hunting leave, you are eligible for Temporary Lodging Expense, or TLE, within 10 days of arriving at your new duty station."

"Finally, there are two advances your sailor can get from the Navy in order to help you make ends meet during your move: Advance Base Pay and Housing Allowance. A sailor also needs to have justification for these advances signed and approved by their chain of command in order to receive it. Remember, these are not a given. Also, both have to be paid back through deductions in your spouse's pay over the next year or so."

"I recommend you request advance funds only if it is absolutely necessary. I've seen too many mil-

San Diego to Jacksonville moving costs

INCONUS	Item	Amount Notes
Moving Income		
Dislocation Allowance (DLA)	+1,195	2 months' BAH
Monetary Allowance (MALT)	+468	2,339 miles to Jax
Per Diem Allowance	+788	Flat rate
Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE)	-	No house hunting
Advance Basic Pay	-	Loan
Advance BAH	-	Loan
Total Moving Income	+2,451	
Moving Expenses		
7 Day House Hunting Trip	-	Wife and kid
Round trip plane fare for 2	-1,400	
Lodging for 2	-350	\$50/night
Food	-280	\$20 x 2 people x 7 days
Misc	-300	
Move out of old rental San Diego	-	
Cleaning/Repair	-100	
Deposit Return	+2,100	1.5 mo SD BAH
7 Days driving to Jacksonville		
Gas	-164	All 3 family
Lodging for 3	-350	\$1.75/gal, 25 mpg
Misc	-300	\$50/night
Renting new place Jacksonville		
Deposit	-1,350	1.5 mo Jax BAH
Move-in costs	-500	
Total Moving Expenses	-3,414	
Net Moving Expense	-963	Out of pocket cost

Source: Ralph Nelson

Stars and Stripes

tary families spend this lump sum of money on things they didn't really need and then suffer the consequences of smaller pay checks and mounting debt. If you do receive an advance, please think twice about what you're spending it on. You're actually borrowing money from yourself, so be careful.

"In the example I just gave you, I've assumed that the sailor's spouse and child fly across country to find a place to rent, then the family of three drives from San Diego to Jacksonville, Fla., over a week. Finally, they move into the home the spouse found while house-hunting when they arrive in Jacksonville."

"Hey, the family in this example is spending almost a grand of their own money on their move," someone noted. "I thought you said the goal was to try to break even."

"I gave you a bleak example on purpose so we could look for ways to break even. Let's talk about ways to reduce this bill, Laurie said."

Even though everyone in the room was quiet, I could tell many were trying to think of a solution. My mind was blank. Jake and I are doing OK, but \$1,000 was a lot of money to pay for a job-required move!

"How about not taking the house-hunting trip?" Sammy asked. "That'd save \$2,330."

"Possibly," Laurie replied. "In this example the sailor is sending his spouse and child back East. He could take the leave instead

and leave his family in San Diego, fly MAMC, fly in the BQ, and eat in the galley and only spend about \$500, saving \$1,830. Either way, you need to find ways to save \$963 in this example."

"Again, I think it's important to take the house-hunting trip. Moving is hard enough, but it's a real pain if you don't have somewhere to move into."

The memory of the hassle of not having a place when I arrived in San Diego was still fresh.

Laurie continued, "Somebody give me one more way to make your move less expensive."

"How about selling your old appliances," Sammy replied. "Excellent," Laurie said. "A garage sale, eBay or even placing classified ads in the local newspaper for the bigger items you don't want to move are excellent ideas."

"The list of ways to make your move a less expensive one is endless. Walk through your entire move — before you move — to find the most value."

Copies of Ralph Nelson's books — "The Savvy Sailor" and "The Savvy Sailor's Officer" — can be purchased by writing to: Master Planning, 500 Washington St., P.O. Box 10071, Rockville, MD 20850 or online at www.savvysailor.com. This article is written and the book is sold with the understanding that neither the author nor Stars and Stripes are professional financial advisers. If you need advice, please seek professional assistance. The author specifically disclaims any liability, loss or risk — personal or otherwise — incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of using or applying any of the information contained in this article or the book. E-mail for feedback is finance@stripes.osd.mil

YOUR MONEY

If maxed out, try new job

Q: With my low-paying job and some debt I am trying to pay off, I find my finances stretched. I look for ways to lower my expenses so I can save, but nothing seems to work. How is it possible to get ahead when you have auto repairs, rising fuel bills, family emergencies and other unexpected life events?

A: You may need to make more money.

You should take a close look at all your expenses, of course. Some of what you consider "fixed" costs may actually be quite flexible. You might be able to, say, find cheaper housing or take in a roommate to reduce shelter expenses.

Also, get out of the mind-set that irregular expenses, such as car-repair bills, are unexpected. Cars conk out, people lose jobs, prices rise, medical events happen; plan for such contingencies.

The most effective way to get ahead of your expenses may be to take a second job or a better job. Boosting your income involves effort and risk, but the bigger risk is remaining in an ever-deepening hole. Good luck.

Q: If a child has three years of college left, is it wise to set up a 529 savings plan? Don't the rules require that the money be invested for five years before taking it out?

A: Generally you can withdraw money from a 529 plan any time, and the money escapes taxation if it's used for qualified education expenses.

There are exceptions, says 529 guru Joseph Hurley. He cites an option in North Carolina's program that has a five-year holding period. A few states also have brief holding periods if you want to take a state deduction for your 529 contribution.

You might be referring to the five-year "spreading

election" for gift tax purposes, said Hurley, a certified public accountant who wrote "The Best Way to Save for College: A Complete Guide to 529 Plans, 2005." Usually people can give as much as \$11,000 a year to a recipient before federal gift tax returns must be filed. But the spreading election allows someone to give as much as \$55,000 in a lump sum to a 529 plan. Any other gifts in the subsequent five years would trigger gift tax consequences.

Talk The only requirement under the spreading election is that the giver live at least five years after the gift.

The bigger issue with opening a 529 account while a child is in college, or even in high school, is that it might not be worth the trouble. The key advantage to the accounts is that, when opened many years before the money is needed, there's lots of time for the assets to grow tax-deferred.

If Junior drops out and you want to withdraw money from your 529 plan, you'd face a 10 percent federal penalty. If the account was opened relatively recently, that might be a high cost.

If the goal is to get assets out of the estate of a parent or grandparent by using the spreading election, then such a contribution can make sense even if the child already is in college. Otherwise, all concerned might be better off if the parents or grandparents simply pay the college bills.

Liz Pulliam Weston is the author of "Your Credit Score: How to Fix, Improve and Protect the 3-Digit Number that Shapes Your Financial Future." Questions for Money Talk can be submitted to her at 3940 Laurel Canyon Blvd., No. 238, Studio City, CA 91604 or via her Web site, www.lizweston.com. She regrets that she cannot respond personally to queries. Distributed by No More Red Inc.

Money Talk



FRIDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES						
52-week High	Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% YTD Chg	52-wk Range
10.62 1/2	9.30 1/4	Dow Jones Industrial	10,312 1/2	-17 1/2	-1.7	9 3/4-10 5/8
3,823 9/16	2,743 4/16	Dow Jones Transportation	3,788 5/8	-10 5/8	-2.9	2 5/8-3 7/8
337 7/8	259 0/8	Dow Jones Utilities	334 5/8	-5 1/8	-1.7	255 1/8-340 1/8
7,205 1/8	6,315 1/8	S&P 500	6,350	-12 1/2	-2.0	6 1/8-7 1/4
1,431 7/8	1,150 1/4	Amer Index	1,434 3/4	+4 2/7	+3.0	1 1/8-1 5/8
2,182 1/2	1,750 5/8	Nasdaq Composite	2,175 5/8	-2 3/4	-0.2	1 5/8-2 1/2
2,316 1/4	1,680 1/2	S&P 500	2,121 1/8	-1 1/3	-1.3	1 5/8-2 1/2
66 3/4	54 8/9	S&P MidCap	66 3/11	-1 1/8	-1.5	48 1/2-67 1/2
12,610 1/2	11,550	Russell 2000	11,549	-15 1/4	-1.3	10 1/2-12 1/2
12,620 1/2	10,268 3/4	Russell 500	11,544 1/4	-16 5/8	-1.6	10 1/2-12 1/2

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Jan. 3)	\$1,396.2
Dollar buys (Jan. 3)	0.7162
British pound (Jan. 3)	\$1.87
Japanese yen (Jan. 3)	0.0074
South Korean won (Jan. 3)	1,009.00
Commercial rates	
Uganda (Shilling)	0.3768
British pound	\$1,917.2
Canada (Dollar)	1.1999
Denmark (Krone)	6.4503
Egypt (Pound)	2.1220
U.S. dollar	\$1,354.00
Hong Kong (Dollar)	0.7187
Hungary (Forint)	180.15
Indonesia (Rupiah)	59.71
Israel (Shekel)	4.3346
Japan (Yen)	102.79
Lebanon (Dinar)	0.2947
Norway (Krone)	0.0352
Philippines (Peso)	56.27
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7504
Singapore (Dollar)	1.6331
South Korea (Won)	1,005.10
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9510
Thailand (Baht)	0.0950
Turkey (Lira)	1,351.251.00

U.S. dollar exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance and are not necessarily the same as those in the United States, Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Cents and Sensibility
Money tip of the day

Charity cautions

CBS MarketWatch

NEW YORK — At this time of year, more than any other, you'll be asked to make donations to charitable organizations. These requests might come by mail, or in the form of a telephone call or a solicitor showing up at your doorstep.

While many of these organizations are legitimate, there are also numerous scam artists who try to divert the efforts of your good intentions into their own pockets. Here are some tips for making wise donations:

- Be wary of appeals that tug at your heartstrings, advises the Federal Trade Commission. Scams are particularly likely to spring up in the wake of natural disasters or other emergencies that may affect you or make you emotional.
- Check out the solicitation thoroughly with your Better Business Bureau or the local chapter of the charity.
- Don't be fooled by charity names that are similar to those of well-recognized organizations. Call or write the charity independently to find out if it's

aware of the solicitation and has authorized the use of its name.

■ Get more information, recommends the Council of Better Business Bureaus. Even newly formed charitable organizations should have literature available on their programs, including how much of your donation will go directly to the cause and how much will be used for administrative purposes.

- Don't be pressured to decide right away. Real charities will be just as excited to receive your donation next week as they are today. Deadlines to donate are often a sign of a scam.
 - Avoid giving cash donations, which aren't traceable and can easily be lost or stolen.
 - Be sure to get a receipt showing the amount of your contribution for tax purposes. Also keep any associated paperwork, such as the canceled check, or your bank or credit-card statement.
- To check out charities, visit the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance at www.give.org. You can inquire about a charity's reputation, and report soliciting by fake organizations.

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS

[illegible]

Name	Div	PE	Last	Chg	YTD %Chg	Name	NAV	Chg.	YTD %Ret.
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[illegible]

PRECIOUS METALS

	New York Merc close	
Gold		\$437.50
Silver		\$6.807

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	3.25
Federal funds market rate	2.3125
3-month bill	2.22
30-year bond	4.83

Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of

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Since relocating, Hornets have gone south

BY BRETT MARTEL
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Byron Scott shook his head and smiled incredulously, brushing off the suggestion that some intangible external force was working to bring down the New Orleans Hornets.

"No, because that means you believe in Voodoo or something else, and I don't believe in that stuff," Scott said.

Voodoo does have a celebrated history in this city, and the decline of the Hornets since their arrival three seasons ago conjures images of someone relentlessly sticking pins in a doll of team owner George Shinn.

Even Scott acknowledged that a streak of hard-luck injuries and related setbacks this season have far exceeded what he could have imagined when he agreed last May to take over as coach.

With only two victories in their first 28 games, the Hornets are on pace to break the NBA's futility record, set by the 1972-73 Philadelphia 76ers, who finished 9-73.

It's gotten so bad for the Hornets that 13-year veteran Jim Jackson refused to show up last week when acquired in a trade, choosing instead to wrack up tens of thousands of dollars in fines.

Jackson's move comes after recent All-Stars Baron Davis and Jamaal Magloire said before the season that they wouldn't mind being traded, and then both were injured after a handful of games.

"I don't think anybody would have imag-



New Orleans Hornets majority owner George Shinn, left, and Hornets general manager Allan Bristow talk in the stands before the start of the team's game against the Phoenix Suns on Wednesday night.

ined this," Scott said. "You can't imagine, out of your top eight or nine players, having five of them gone at the same time."

The Hornets have been more competitive than their record indicates; 15 of their 26 losses have been by single digits, and four came in overtime.

New Orleans' play should improve with Davis' recent return. Also due back shortly are Rodney Rogers and David West, while Magloire could return by mid-February from a dislocated and broken finger.

Former All-Star Jamal Mashburn, however, might not return from his knee injury. And given the pattern of this and recent seasons, it would be foolish to assume the rest of the team will return to full health and remain that way.

"This team has always been kind of jinxed. We've always had guys hurt — major guys — even when we were in Charlotte," veteran forward P.J. Brown said, recalling Mashburn's bout with a mysterious virus that caused positional vertigo during the 2001-02 playoffs.

The Hornets' arrival in New Orleans for the 2002-03 season was supposed to mean a fresh start for Shinn and a world of potential for a franchise with novel appeal and the type of modern stadium that voters and politicians in North Carolina refused.

Coming off a second-round playoff exit and with Mashburn back, there was talk of possibly reaching the NBA Finals — even though a postseason game had never been played in New Orleans in the years the Jazz played there. Once the playoffs arrived in town, things immediately went wrong. Davis hurt his knee in Game 1 of the opening round series, and Mashburn fractured a finger in Game 2. Philadelphia won the series in six games.

Last season, under new coach Tim Floyd, Mashburn's potentially career-ending knee injury flared up. He played just 19 games.

Davis and guard David Wesley missed time periodically with injuries and the team finished 41-41, before another first-round-playoff exit, this time to Miami.

Since then, improving the team through free-agency has been difficult because Mashburn's guaranteed salary of about \$9 million, although insurance pays most of it, still counts against the team's salary cap. The injury also makes him tough to trade.

Meanwhile, attendance, solidly in the middle of the league in the Hornets' first season in New Orleans, has fallen off and is close to last in the league.

And it seems team officials fudged attendance figures in their final season in Charlotte, while inflating projections in New Orleans just to get league approval for the move, drawing an \$8 million fine from the NBA. The fine reportedly would be forgiven if Shinn buys out minority owner Ray Woodward, who league officials blamed for the deception.

Despite the problems, Shinn, at least publicly, has been a rock of optimism. He says the team — thanks to a favorable arena lease, its cable TV package and sponsorship — has made money.

Not all players are as down on the franchise as Davis and Magloire. Brown, a Louisiana native and member of the Hornets since 2000-01, points to the team's more than decade-long stretch of .500 or better regular seasons, which appears certain to end this season.

"This organization has had a lot of success over the past 10 years," Brown said. "What I'm thinking is, it's one bad year. Some teams go through that. Orlando went through it last year. I'm hoping this is just one of those years and we can get out of it ... and forget this ever happened."

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Yankees reach tentative deal for Randy Johnson

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — One week later, Randy Johnson again appears headed to New York.

The Arizona Diamondbacks and Yankees reached a tentative agreement Thursday on a deal to send the Big Unit to the Bronx for pitchers Javier Vazquez and Brad Halsey, young catcher Dioner Navarero and \$9 million, a baseball official said on condition of anonymity.

The teams finished putting the deal in writing Friday but do not intend to submit it to the commissioner's office until Monday, the official said.

While not confirming the substance of the report, Diamondbacks managing partner Ken Kendrick said the teams "are in serious discussions."

Kendrick also indicated Arizona was working on another deal involving Vazquez. One possible suitor was the Los Angeles Dodgers, who could add outfielder Shawn Green and pitcher Brad Penny to Arizona.

Separate trades, if they include Los Angeles, would in essence reach the same conclusion as the three-team effort that fell apart Dec. 21 when the Dodgers backed out. Arizona also could deal Vazquez to another team.

"We would not agree to a final deal or a trade of Randy Johnson unless we believed it would benefit our team," Kendrick said. "That would require in return at least two significant major league ballplayers."

Kendrick said, however, that no deal could be completed, or the paperwork even submitted to the commissioner's office, until early next week.

In addition, the Yankees finalized a \$3 million, one-year contract with Tim Lincecum, a deal that includes a club option for 2006.

Even after the Yankees and Diamondbacks finalize their deal, several things must happen before the trade could become complete.



Arizona Diamondbacks ace Randy Johnson reportedly will be traded to the New York Yankees for pitchers Javier Vazquez and Brad Halsey, catcher Dioner Navarero and \$9 million. A baseball official said the teams will submit paperwork for the deal on Monday.

■ Because the money was greater than \$1 million, commissioner Bud Selig must give his approval, which probably won't happen until next week.

■ All players must pass physicals.

■ Johnson has to formally give approval because he has a no-trade clause.

■ The Yankees want a 72-hour window to negotiate an extension with the 41-year-old Johnson, whose current contract expires after the 2005 season.

Johnson, a 10-time All-Star, would join a reshaped rotation that now includes Carl Pavano and Jaret Wright.

The Yankees, who already had Mike Mussina and Kevin Brown, bring a 3-0 lead in the American League championship se-

ries and lost in seven games to the Boston Red Sox.

The money New York is sending Arizona, which will be paid over several seasons, would offset some of the \$34.5 million Vazquez is owed: \$10.5 million in 2005, \$11.5 million in 2006 and \$12.5 million in 2007. New York is making the final \$1 million payment of his signing bonus, which is due Friday.

Johnson was 16-14, a record skewed by playing for a team that went 51-111, tied for the 10th-most losses in major league history.

Martinez, 37, a two-time All-Star, played for New York from 1996 to 2001, helping the Yankees win five AL pennants and four

World Series titles. A close friend of Derek Jeter, Martinez hit .262 with 23 homers and 76 RBIs for Tampa Bay last season.

Martinez gets \$2.75 million next season and New York has a \$3 million option for 2006 with a \$250,000 buyout.

Cardinals working on 2B Alomar

ST. LOUIS — Searching for the final piece to a revamped middle infield, the St. Louis Cardinals are working on a deal with switch-hitting second baseman Roberto Alomar.

Cardinals spokesman Brian Bartow said Thursday that "certainly there are talks between the two sides" as the NL champions look to replace Tony Womack, who signed this month with the New York Yankees.

Bartow labeled as premature a report that the Cardinals had signed Alomar, a 10-time Gold Glove winner, to a \$500,000, one-year contract.

Alomar turns 37 in February and played in just 56 games last year because of a broken right hand after being hit by a pitch.

Alomar's agent, Jaime Torres, refused to discuss the Cardinals' interest in a 12-time All-Star, who is a career .300 hitter.

Alomar split last season between Arizona and the Chicago White Sox, batting a combined .263 with four home runs and 24 RBIs in 171 plate appearances.

Boston's Damon gets married

BOSTON — Boston Red Sox center fielder Johnny Damon married girlfriend Michelle Mangan in Florida Thursday in an affair attended by stars of the sports, television and music worlds.

Red Sox teammates Doug Mientkiewicz, Mike Timlin, Kevin Millar, Bronson Arroyo and Kevin Youkilis were among the 175 guests at the Cardinals' Ritz Carlton Grande Lakes Hotel. AC/DC lead singer Brian Johnson and celebrity chef Todd English also attended.

The reception capped three days of events, including a private comedy show for guests featuring Mike O'Malley, Craig Shoemaker, and from "Saturday Night Live," Seth Meyers.

Suspect in Vanderbilt player's death surrenders

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — A man charged with killing a Vanderbilt football player turned himself in Friday, police said.

Rodney "Roscoe" Roman was charged with first-degree murder in the death of Kwame Doster, a running back with Vanderbilt, and two counts of attempted murder, Tampa police spokesman Joe Durkin said.

Roman was accompanied by his lawyer, Daniel Castillo, when he surrendered at the Hillsborough County Jail, Durkin said.

"My client is not the person they are looking for," Castillo told The Tampa Tribune. "They got the wrong guy."

Doster was shot to death Sunday after his friends got in a dispute with three other men about whose car was better, Durkin said.

Police said Roman, who is in his late 20s, fired the shot that killed Doster and was the driver of the car that pulled up alongside the vehicle Doster was riding in Sunday.

Roman's lawyer did not immediately return a message Friday seeking comment.

Sports briefs

Doster was the first Vanderbilt player recognized as the South-eastern Conference Freshman of the Year in 2002 after setting a team record of 798 rushing yards.

Teams, athletes helping with tsunami relief efforts

Sports teams, athletes and even bowl games are organizing relief efforts for victims of the tsunami disaster in Asia.

The American Red Cross will collect donations at the Rose Bowl and the Cotton Bowl on Saturday; volunteers from Northwest Medical Teams will accept relief assistance donations at Sunday's NFL game between the Atlanta Falcons and Seattle Seahawks.

"You have all seen it on television and seen the devastation," said Seattle coach Mike Holmgren, whose wife, Kathy, is a board member of the Northwest Medical Teams. "People are always asking, 'What can I do?' This is one of the things we can do."

The NBA's Charlotte Bobcats

accepted donations from fans at Friday night's game against the Seattle SuperSonics, and the New Jersey Nets will donate a percentage of all tickets sold over the next two weeks to UNICEF.

The son of baseball great Roberto Clemente is sending money and two tons of supplies — originally destined for Nicaragua to honor his late father's ill-fated humanitarian flight exactly 32 years ago — to tsunami victims.

"My father always said, 'If you have an opportunity to make things better and you don't, then you are wasting your time on Earth,'" Roberto Clemente Jr. said in a telephone interview Thursday with The Associated Press from Puerto Rico.

Some of the biggest names in tennis are also assisting victims. Roger Federer, Andy Roddick and Lleyton Hewitt, the three top-ranked players, will auction autographed rackets, with the money going to UNICEF relief.

Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova donated \$10,000 Thursday to the victims in Thailand. Sharapova, in Bangkok for an exhibition match against Venus Williams, presented the check to Thailand's prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Nuggets' Anthony, MTV VI Vazquez engaged

DENVER — Carmelo Anthony finally has some good news about his personal life: He's engaged to MTV VI La La Vasquez.

The Denver Nuggets' star said Thursday he made his proposal, accompanied by a 9-carat ring, on Christmas Day. They haven't set a wedding date.

The engagement follows a series of unflattering off-the-court news about Anthony. He was charged with misdemeanor drug possession in October after airport inspectors found marijuana in his backpack. The charge was dropped after a friend said the marijuana was his.

In November, three men were arrested on suspicion of trying to extort \$3 million from Anthony with a videotape of a bar fight that broke out after someone spit a drink on Vasquez in Manhattan in September.

In early December, Anthony popped up on a homemade DVD circulating in Baltimore, his hometown. Someone on the DVD warns that people who tip police about drug deals "get a hole in their head."

Anthony said he had nothing to do with the DVD and condemned the message.

Krajicek helps put Netherlands in main draw

PERTH, Australia — The 15-year-old sister of 1996 Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek helped the Netherlands earn its first spot in nine years in the main draw of the Hopman Cup, a mixed teams event and Australian Open tuneup.

Michaëlla Krajicek, winner of last year's U.S. Open girls' title, won a qualifying match against Zimbabwe on Saturday, beating Cara Black 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-4. The spot in nine years in the Dutch 7-6 (7), 7-5, giving the Dutch the eighth and final place in the field. Zimbabwe won a mixed doubles set 7-6 to make the final score 2-1.

The Dutch are grouped with the defending champion United States, Slovakia and Australia. The United States, which plays the Netherlands on Tuesday, is without top-ranked Lindsay Davenport, who has a knee injury. Meghann Shaughnessy will team with James Blake, who won this event with Serena Williams in 2003 and Davenport last year.

Louisville ends Boise State's win streak

BY TERESA M. WALKER

The Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — In the highest-scoring Liberty Bowl ever, it was a defensive play by Louisville that ended Boise State's 22-game winning streak.

Louisville safety Kerry Rhodes intercepted a pass in the end zone as time expired to preserve No. 7 Louisville's 44-40 victory over 10th-ranked Boise State on Friday.

"It's a great way to end it," Louisville coach Bobby Petrino said. "A national audience, two teams that were supposed to score over 84 points. I think we hit it right on the top."

Louisville now enters the Big East Conference in game style after handing Boise State its first loss since September 2003 in a game that was the most important in school history for both programs.

"This was big for us," Boise State receiver Chris Carr said. "We don't see ourselves as a non-BCS school or a little school. We see ourselves on the same level as any school we play."

"We wanted to come out here and prove to everybody that we're not a team in the WAC that's not very good, and we just beat up on little teams."

Eric Shelton scored the

"I think where he [Louisville's Stefan LeFors] made some big plays, huge plays, was running the football. On key downs and in key situations, he really sparked them."

Dan Hawkins

Boise State coach

go-ahead touchdown on a 1-yard run with 6:48 left. Stefan LeFors threw two touchdown passes and also ran for a score as the Cardinals (11-1), who have never finished a season ranked higher than 13th, matched a school record for victories.

The Cardinals won their third Liberty Bowl in their final appearance as a Conference USA team.

The Broncos (11-1) had one last chance to win after Art Carmody's 19-yard field goal with 1:10 left put Louisville up by four. Quarterback Jared Zabransky drove the Broncos to the Louisville 30 before his final pass into the end zone as time expired was intercepted by Rhodes. The Louisville defender stood for his missed interception opportunity in a 41-38 loss on Oct. 14 to then-No. 3 Miami.

"God blessed me to put me in position to make the play, and I made the play," Rhodes said.

The win was a welcome end to a week in which the Cardinals

were forced to deal with the news that Petrino had interviewed with LSU about its open coaching job. They certainly didn't seem distracted against the Broncos.

Petrino kept referring to the Cardinals as "we," and asked if that would remain the same, he had a short answer.

"We certainly hope so," Petrino said, and he later confirmed he'd withdrawn his name from consideration by LSU.

LeFors said the Cardinals had no problem focusing on the task at hand with all the rumors about Petrino's future.

"We wanted to play the game between the lines and let all that other talk, just put it in the back of your minds and not even worry about it," LeFors said.

Everyone expected a high-scoring game in a bowl pairing the nation's top two offenses, and the teams didn't disappoint as they swapped the lead five times. The 84 points topped the 80 by Colorado and Alabama in 1969 and

was one of a handful of records set.

Louisville won for the second time in seven bowls despite a season-high four turnovers. The Cardinals rolled up 564 yards, topping 500 yards for the ninth time this season.

LeFors was 18-for-26 for 193 yards and ran 12 times for 32 yards.

The Cardinals rushed for 729 yards against a defense that had been the nation's fourth-best against the run.

He, particularly running the football, killed us," Boise State coach Dan Hawkins said of LeFors. "That doesn't mean he didn't make some throws because he obviously did. But I think where he made some big plays, huge plays, was running the football. On key downs and in key situations, he really sparked them."

This was the biggest game in school history for Boise State, a program that moved up to Division I-A in 1996. The Broncos,

who played their first three bowls in their home field known for its blue turf, thought they could keep up with an offense that had trailed only Louisville for most yards and points.

But the Broncos, who lost 12 starters from their 2003 squad, finished with 284 yards offense, well below their 511.6-yard average.

The teams still rewrote the Liberty Bowl record book. They combined for the most points in the first quarter with 24, and their 52 points were the most for the first half.

Boise State kicker Tyler Jones had a record 48-yard field goal on the Broncos' first drive, and Broncos linebacker Andy Avalos had a 92-yard interception return off LeFors in the first quarter that bested the 79-yarder by Michael Jordan of Tulane in 1998.

Boise State led as much as 34-21 early in the third quarter after scoring 24 straight points.

The Cardinals settled down when LeFors took them on an 81-yard drive in early plays, which he capped with a 14-yard TD toss to J.R. Russell. LeFors then gave Louisville the lead at 35-34 when he ran in for an yard on the 2:17 left in the third.

Boise State led at 40-35 when Jon Helmanollander plunged in from 2 yards with 10:51 left.

Miami wins Florida 'state title' by blasting Gators

BY MARK LONG

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Miami center Joel Rodriguez walked across the confetti-covered field, carrying the Peach Bowl trophy, hugging teammates and waving to fans.

It certainly didn't have the same feel as a national championship or even a conference title.

But it will do.

"This is a great way to end your career," said Rodriguez, a senior. Indeed, The Hurricanes gladly settled for the state title Friday night.

Devin Hester returned a blocked field goal 78 yards for a touchdown, Roscoe Parrish returned a punt 72 yards for a score and the 14th-ranked Hurricanes beat No. 20 Florida 27-10 in the Peach Bowl.

"Those guys are playmakers," Miami coach Larry Coker said. "Team speed is one thing, but to have the ability to make people miss and score touchdowns is a knack that Roscoe and Devin have."

Miami earned a third consecutive "state title" by beating Florida and Florida State in the same season, splitting interim coach Charlie Strong's debut and extending its winning streak against the Gators (7-5) to six games.

This time, the Hurricanes (9-3) didn't have a strong performance from Brock Berlin. The senior quarterback who transferred from Florida in January 2002 torched his former team in a 38-10 comeback victory last year.

Berlin finished 13-for-23 for 171 yards Friday. He had a 20-yard touchdown pass to Ryan



Roscoe Parrish's 72-yard punt return TD helped Miami beat Florida 27-10 Friday night in the Peach Bowl.

Moore in the third quarter and ended his career 5-0 as a starter against Miami's two biggest rivals — Florida and Florida State.

"There's no better feeling than beating FSU three times and Florida twice," Berlin said. "If that isn't big, I don't know what is."

Although Berlin started perfect against in-state competition, Mi-

ami's special teams and defense did the most damage on New Year's Eve.

"In big games like this, you can't give up big plays," Strong said. "Miami ended up getting big plays. They got the two big plays in the kicking game."

Just four plays after a blocked punt gave the Gators great field

position, defensive lineman Thomas Carroll blocked Matt Leach's 32-yard field goal attempt. Hester picked up the loose ball and sprinted the other way for a score.

The momentum swing set the tone for the Hurricanes, who sacked Chris Leak on the next two plays and intercepted a pass

late in the second quarter. Miami put constant pressure on Leak and finished with five sacks.

"Chris was never able to get comfortable in the pocket," Strong said. "They got tons of pressure and a lot of sacks."

Leak overthrew O.J. Small in play after Frank Gore fumbled in Florida territory. Hester picked off the pass and snaked his way 28 yards across the field to put Miami back in field goal range. Jon Peattie nailed a 47-yarder to give the Gators a 10-3 lead.

Miami forced Florida to punt on the ensuing possession, and Parrish caught the line-drive kick and ran untouched up the seam for a 72-yard score.

Strong said the special teams breakdowns might not have happened had fired coach Ron Zook been around. Zook also was Florida's special teams coordinator.

It got worse. Leach missed a 41-yard field goal in the waning seconds of the first half that could have sparked the Gators.

Berlin's TD pass early in the third quarter silenced the partisan and packed Georgia Dome.

"We woke up a little bit on offense in the second half," Coker said. "We got up by three scores, and the clock became our ally."

Still, Leak's best pass of the game got the Gators back in it.

He faked a handoff, had plenty of time and found senior Cornelius wide open on a post pattern for a 45-yard score.

Leak finished 19-for-39 for 262 yards with a touchdown and two interceptions. But his comeback was short-lived.

Miami capped a 65-yard drive with a 12-yard field goal, making it 27-10 early in the fourth.



Texas Tech's Joel Filani pulls in a 60-yard touchdown pass as California's Daymeion Hughes chases the play in the third quarter of the Holiday Bowl on Thursday night.

Red Raiders bait Brown, BCS

BY BERNIE WILSON

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Mack Brown and the BCS have been exonerated by the Texas Tech Red Raiders.

Stunned at getting knocked out of the Rose Bowl by the Texas Longhorns, the No. 4 California Golden Bears couldn't even hang with No. 23 Texas Tech in the Holiday Bowl, losing 45-31 on Thursday night.

Cal coach Jeff Tedford said there was no connection between the snub and the drubbing.

"We didn't lose the game because we didn't go to the Rose Bowl," Tedford said. It had nothing to do with focus and preparation because we didn't go to the Rose Bowl.

"Once and for all, please, it has nothing to do with it. It is not going to set our program back."

In that case, it looks as if Brown isn't such a villain, after all.

Cal had been in position to go to the Rose Bowl for the first time in 46 seasons, but was leaptfrogged in the final Bowl Championship Series standings by Brown's Texas Longhorns, who ended up in Pasadena to face Michigan on Saturday.

The day the BCS pairings were released, Cal quarterback Aaron Rodgers said Brown "was a little classless" for begging for poll votes to help his Longhorns, and that the system was "fairly." And Tedford said votes in the coaches' poll should be made public.

The Longhorns, by the way, beat Texas Tech 51-21 at Lubbock on Oct. 23.

Texas Tech fans mocked Cal with chants of "Overrated!" in the closing minutes.

The Golden Bears (10-2), who were 11½-point favorites, simply had no answer against the Red Raiders (8-4) and their efficient spread offense, which uses four wide receivers most of the time.

Tech senior Sonny Cumbie threw for a career-high 530 yards and three touchdowns, including a 60-yarder to Joel Filani. Safety Vincent Meeks set up a score with a 48-yard interception return.

Cumbie was 39-for-60 and broke the Holiday Bowl attempts record of 59 set by BYU's Ty Detmer in 1989. He was short of Detmer's Holiday Bowl record of 576 yards, also set in 1989.

"We have a great band of players around me," Cumbie said, "and so throwing the ball to them makes things happen. I knew we could have a big night if we executed real well."

Cumbie said opponents can practice all they want, "but our receivers are too fast, our offensive linemen are too good. You can't simulate how good our offense is in three weeks of practice."

Cal's J.J. Arrington became the third running back in Pac-10 history to rush for 2,000 yards in a season. The senior from Nashville, N.C., carried 25 times for 173 yards and reached 2,018 yards.

Southern Cal's Marcus Allen had 247 yards in 1981 and Charles White had 2,050 in 1979. Both won the Heisman Trophy.

Arrington scored on a 2-yard run in the first quarter, his 15th rushing TD of the season, a school record. He had been tied with Lindsey Chapman and Russell White.

The Golden Bears were undisciplined on defense — they had two personal fouls on one Tech drive — and Rodgers looked confused in the final minutes without career receptions leader Geoff McArthur, who broke his left leg in the fourth quarter of a 26-16 victory at Southern Mississippi on Dec. 4.

"We thought we had a good game plan for them," Arrington said. "We didn't underestimate them at all. We worked hard like we did every other week for anybody else."

Cal's only other loss was 23-17 to No. 1 USC on Oct. 9.

Texas Tech had four scoring drives that took less than two minutes each. Trailing 14-7 after the first quarter, the Red Raiders scored 24 straight points and had a commanding 31-14 lead by early in the third quarter.

Cumbie threw a 5-yard touchdown pass to Jarrett Hicks for a 17-14 lead with 8:57 left before halftime. The short drive was set up by Meeks' interception return.

Tech piled it on with Taurean Henderson's 2-yard run late in the second quarter and Cumbie's 60-yard scoring pass to Filani on the opening drive of the second half on a 17-point lead. Filani caught the ball at the Cal 40 and raced past cornerback Daymeion Hughes into the end zone.

Hicks also had a 9-yard TD catch in the first quarter.

Rodgers threw an 11-yard TD pass to Garrett Cross and scored on a 1-yard sneak, both in the fourth quarter. Rodgers was 24-for-42 for 246 yards, with one interception.

Novice QB sparks Sun Devils past Boilermakers

The Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas — Sam Keller showed remarkable poise in his first collegiate start, throwing a 19-yard touchdown pass to Rudy Burgess with 44 seconds left to lead No. 21 Arizona State to a 27-23 victory over Purdue in the Sun Bowl on Friday.

Starting for injured star Andrew Walter, the untested sophomore completed all four of his passes on the final 80-yard drive in a frantic finish that stunned the Boilermakers and the Sun Bowl record crowd of 51,288.

Burgess caught Keller's final throw on a screen play, slipped two tackles along the sideline and cut back inside en route to the end zone to give the Sun Devils (9-3) the lead only 30 seconds after Purdue had gone ahead.

The Boilermakers (7-5) had their final opportunity go for naught when a desperation hove by quarterback Kyle Orton fell incomplete in the end zone as time expired.

Keller put on quite a show in place of Walter, going 25-for-45 for 370 yards and three touchdowns.

Burgess, who wasn't selected to start until Hakin Hill was kicked off the team earlier this week for breaking unspecified team rules, also had a career afternoon with 189 yards of offense and two touchdown receptions.

Derek Hagan added nine receptions for 182 yards and a touchdown for ASU, which had lost its three previous bowl games.

"A lot of people doubted we could win this game without Andrew," Hagan said. "But we had

Bowl roundup

no doubts at all.

Cal had a lot of confidence in Sam and today he showed what he could do."

Arizona State's novice offensive standouts outplayed Orton and Taylor Stubblefield, who made up one of the NCAA's most prolific pass-catch duos. Orton finished 23-for-47 for 201 yards with three touchdowns and Stubblefield had seven catches for 81 yards in their final college game together.

Purdue has lost five of its past six bowl games, its only victory coming over Washington in the 2002 Sun Bowl. Orton and the Boilermakers have played just three of the past four Sun Bowls.

"We obviously can't handle all this freedom of enjoying the sights," Purdue coach Joe Tiller said of the team's bowl-week routine. "Maybe we'll put them in a monastery. It's unfortunate because the guys believe these guys are going to have to play a pro."

Minnesota 20, Alabama 16: At Nashville, Tenn., Marion Barber III ran for 187 yards and a touchdown and teammate Laurence Maroney added 105 yards on the ground as Minnesota edged Alabama in the Music City Bowl.

Barber and Maroney, the only teammates in NCAA history to each rush for 1,000 yards in consecutive seasons, were the only runners to go over 100 yards in a game this season against the Crimson Tide (6-6), which entered with the nation's second-ranked defense.

The Golden Gophers (7-5) ran

for 276 yards to overcome three turnovers — including two by Barber — on their first three possessions. Still, they nearly gave the game away in the fourth quarter.

Rhys Lloyd, who made field goals from 27 and 24 yards, missed a 24-yard attempt with 5:34 left that would have sealed the victory.

On Minnesota's next possession, it was pinned deep in its own end and elected to take a safety to make it 20-16 rather than attempt a punt.

The decision nearly backfired. Alabama's Tyrone Prothro returned the free kick to the Minnesota 48, and four completions by Spencer Pennington got the Crimson Tide to the 15. But Pennington overruled an open receiver for a likely touchdown on third down and couldn't convert a fourth-and-5 play with 1:14 left.

In bowl games Thursday:

No. 25 Boston College 37,

North Carolina 24: At Charlotte, N.C., kicker Ryan O'Leary ran 21 yards for a touchdown on a fake field goal one play after quarterback Paul Peterson was taken off the field on a stretcher with a broken leg, giving Boston College a victory in the Continental Tire Bowl.

Before leaving, Peterson went 24-for-33 for 236 yards and two touchdowns, helping Boston College (9-3) win a bowl game for the fifth straight season. He was unable to return to the field to accept the game's MVP award. Instead, his wife went out to collect the trophy.

Boston College gave the Big East its first victory in the 3-year-old bowl. It was Boston College's final game in the league; it joins the Atlantic Coast Conference next season.

Darian Durant threw three scoring passes for North Carolina (6-6), and completed 23 of 41 passes for 259 yards.

Northern Illinois 34, Troy 21:

At San Jose, Calif., Josh Haldi passed for 146 yards and rushed for two touchdowns to lead Northern Illinois past Troy in the Silberman Valley Football Classic, the first bowl victory in 21 years for the Huskies (9-3).

Northern Illinois overcame a steady downpour, lighting problems and a delayed kickoff by scoring 34 straight points.

Garrett Wolfe rushed for his 21st touchdown of the season for Northern Illinois before leaving with a hip injury. A.J. Harris filled in with 120 yards rushing and another score.

Troy (7-5) scored two touchdowns in the first nine minutes of its first bowl game in just its fourth season in Division I-A.

D.T. McDowell threw a touchdown pass and rushed for two scores, but the Trojans became stuck in the mild, rainy Spartan Stadium and were unable to move the ball effectively or stop the Huskies' rushing attack.

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Illinois routs Cincinnati in Vegas

The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Deron Williams had 18 points and six rebounds to help top-ranked Illinois beat No. 22 Cincinnati 67-45 Friday night in the final game of the Las Vegas Holiday Classic.

Dee Brown and Roger Powell added 13 points apiece for Illinois (14-0), which did not trail for the sixth consecutive game. Jason Maxiell led the Bearcats (11-1) with 12 points and 11 rebounds.

Illinois is off to its best start since 1988-89, when it began 17-0 and reached the Final Four. The Illini have only trailed for 21 minutes, 32 seconds of 560 minutes this season. The last time Illinois trailed was Dec. 9 against Georgetown.

No. 13 Washington 81, California 67: At Seattle, Tre Simmons scored 18 points, and Bobby Jones had 16 to help Washington win a Pac-10 Conference opener.

Will Conroy and Jamaal Williams each added 11 points as Washington (11-1) extended its home winning streak to 14 games, the longest in six years. The Huskies also won their seventh straight overall, the most since 1990-91.

Richard Midgley led California (7-4) with 18 points.

No. 16 Iowa 67, Saint Louis 58: At Iowa City, Iowa, Pierre Pierce scored 24 points and led a late 10-0 run that enabled Iowa to finally pull away from stubborn Saint Louis.

Adam Haiskus added 13 points for the Hawkeyes (12-1). Ezek Obanah had 15 points for Saint Louis (2-10) and Anthony Dreja 14.

In Thursday's games:

Missouri 63, No. 12 Gonzaga 61: At Columbia, Mo., Gonzaga, accustomed to pulling off upsets, fell to Missouri just two days after the Bulldogs edged No. 3 Oklahoma State.

Jason Conley had 16 points and 13 rebounds, and Missouri survived a lengthy cold stretch at the finish to hang on.

The Tigers (7-5) scored just two points in the final 8½ minutes, yet improved to 16-38 against teams in the Top 25 in six seasons.



Illinois' Roger Powell dunks during the first half of the top-ranked Illini's 67-45 rout of No. 22 Cincinnati in the championship game of the Las Vegas Holiday Classic on Friday night.

under Quin Snyder. It was the Tigers' first victory over a ranked opponent since a defeat of Oklahoma State in double overtime last Feb. 24 at home.

No. 1 Illinois 69, Northwestern (La.) St. 51: Luther Head scored 18 points to lead Illinois past Northwestern State in the Las Vegas Holiday Classic. The Illini (3-4) have their best record since going 17-0 in 1988-89.

Jermaine Spencer, Clifton Lee and Jermaine Wallace each had seven points to lead

Northwestern State (5-7).

No. 4 North Carolina 107, Cleveland St. 64: At Chapel Hill, N.C., Raymond Felton ran his streak of consecutive three-pointers to 12 and finished with 13 points and eight assists for North Carolina (11-1).

Omari Westley had 18 points for the Vikings (3-5), who lost their fifth straight.

No. 5 Wake Forest 98, North Carolina A&T 76: At Winston Salem, N.C., Justin Gray scored 21 of his 23 points in the first half to lift Wake Forest (11-1). Sean Booker scored 18 points for the Aggies (1-11).

No. 7 Syracuse 80, Hofstra 75: At Syracuse, N.Y., Hakim Warrick scored 29 points and the Orange (13-1) rallied to beat previously unbeaten Hofstra. Antoine Hood had 17 points for the Pride (9-1).

No. 11 Connecticut 123, Quinnipiac 71: At Hartford, Conn., Josh Boone had 22 points and eight blocks to lead Connecticut (6-1) to a rout of Quinnipiac (4-5).

It was the highest output for Connecticut in 251 games at the Hartford Civic Center.

No. 14 Arizona 84, Richmond 71: At Tucson, Ariz., Chris Rodgers tied his career high with 20 points to help Arizona (10-2) win the title game of the Fiesta Bowl Classic.

Jamaal Scott had 16 points for Richmond (5-5).

No. 19 Louisville 78, E. Kentucky 63: At Louisville, Ky., Francisco Garcia scored 23 points and went over 1,000 for his career to lead the Cardinals (10-2).

Michael Haneey added 22 points and reached the 1,000-point mark for Eastern Kentucky (8-3).

No. 21 Mississippi State 71, Virginia Tech 65: At New Orleans, Lawrence Roberts scored 25 points and grabbed 19 rebounds as Mississippi State (12-2) rallied in the Sugar Bowl Classic.

Carlos Dixon led the Hokies (6-5) with 19 points.

No. 22 Cincinnati 95, Longwood 69: Jason Maxiell had 30 points and eight rebounds for Cincinnati (11-0) in the Las Vegas Holiday Classic. Michael Jefferson scored 27 points for Longwood (1-15).

AFA wins; Army and Navy fall

The Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Tim Keller made his first four three-point attempts and finished with 12 points Friday to help Air Force beat Rutgers 70-53 and end a three-game losing streak. Keller also had five assists and Antoine Hood added 12 points for the Falcons (7-5), who ended Rutgers' four-game winning streak in their first game against a Big East opponent since 1988.

For years, teams from major conferences had no compelling reason to play Air Force, a

long-struggling program that last season made its first NCAA tournament appearance since 1962. Now, as the Scarlet Knights (6-4) learned, there are new reasons to avoid the Falcons. Methodical and mind-numbing as a metronome, Air Force ran its slow-down, Princeton-style offense by the book, rarely letting Rutgers run or get into any kind of flow.

Ricky Shields had 12 points and Quincy Douby 10 for the Scarlet Knights, who lost their first three-point bucket until 2 minutes gone in the second half. Air Force went 10-for-24 from three-point range, most of the attempt coming with the shot clock in single digits.

Air Force held Rutgers to 20 points in the first half and, although the pace picked up a bit in the second, the Knights didn't really start running and scoring until after they had fallen behind by 16 with about 5 minutes left.

In Thursday's games:

Fairleigh Dickinson 69, Army 53: At Hackensack, N.J., Chad Timberlake had 18 points and seven rebounds to lead Fairleigh Dickinson (5-7) past Army (2-8).

Tamien Trent added 15 points for Fairleigh Dickinson. Colin Harris led Army with 15 points.

Army pulled within eight points twice, but the second half, but Fairleigh Dickinson went on a 15-1 run, surging to a 55-33 lead, its biggest of the night, with 9:11 left.

Ctad 87, Navy 72: At Charleston, S.C., Donny McLendon scored 23 points and Kevin Hammack 19 for Citadel (8-2), which has its best record since 1992.

The Bulldogs led only 36-32 at halftime after Navy (4-7) pulled within four on David's Hooper's three-pointer. The Citadel piled it on in the final half, holding Navy 20 points off 12 Navy turnovers.

Hooper led Navy with 15 points. Matt Mannin and Laramie Mergeron added 13, and Corey Johnson had 12.

Victory over N.C. State boosts St. John's

BY JIM O'CONNELL

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — There was a lot of looks of disbelief in Madison Square Garden as St. John's ran away from North Carolina State to win the Holiday Festival.

It felt like the old days for St. John's, which beat the 17th-ranked Wolfpack 63-45 on Thursday night.

St. John's, a program going through the worst two years in the school's 90-plus seasons of basketball, had fans thinking about the glory days.

"This was a great night for the team, the program, especially with the stuff we've been dealing with," first-year coach Norm Roberts said.

It was St. John's 39th appearance in the annual tournament, its 13th title — but the first since 1996.

This victory was as dominant as any in the days of Hall of Fame coach Lou Carnesecca or players such as Sonny Dew, Chris Mullin or Malik Sealy. St. John's (6-4) led 27-10 at halftime and pulled away by holding the Wolfpack (10-2) without a field goal for a 14-minute stretch.

"The Holiday Festival is St. John's tournament," Roberts said. "We should play well here and expect to win."

When Cedric Simmons finally scored with 13:05 left, it brought North Carolina State within 39-14. The last previous field goal came with 7:02 to play in the first half and that three-pointer by Cameron Berner ended a 7-20 scoreless drought for the Wolfpack.

"It was a combination of our defense and their shooting," Roberts said of the Wolfpack's 20 percent shooting from the field.

"They missed some shots they normally make but we did a good job defending their first shot and then did a great job rebounding."

Darryl Hill had 19 points for St. John's and was selected turnkey MVP. Eugene Lawrence had 10 points and seven rebounds.

Julius Hodge, the Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year and a former New York City high school star, went 0-for-6 from the field in the first half and missed two more shots before getting his first field goal on a dunk with 11:13 to go that made it 42-18.

Hodge finished with 19 points on 7-for-21 shooting, but the Wolfpack got no closer than 16 in the second half.

"They had too big of a lead and once you let a team get up that

much, there's not much you can do," Hodge said. "This was an embarrassing loss. We lost to a team that's just not as good. We should beat them 99 out of 100 times, but they won their night."

St. John's fired coach Mike Jarvis last December, just six games into the season. The team went on to a 6-21 record, the worst in school history.

The program was rocked in February when six players were suspended from the program over a curfew-breaking violation to a Pittsburgh-area strip club.

Last month, the school imposed two years' of penalties on the program after an investigation revealed a former player was given cash by an athletic department employee. The penalties include a postseason ban for 2004-05 and the loss of a scholarship this season and next. The NCAA has yet to complete its investigation.

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Denver Nuggets' victory

The Associated Press

DENVER—Michael Cooper spent most of his first game as an NBA coach sitting on the bench, hoping the nervousness he felt inside wouldn't filter out on the floor. Apparently, Cooper learned a little about acting in all those years in Los Angeles.

Carmelo Anthony had 24 points in his first game, and the Portland Trail Blazers and the Denver Nuggets made Cooper a winner in his NBA coaching debut. The Nuggets won their first six-game losing streak with a 97-92 victory over Philadelphia on Friday night.

Cooper became the interim coach Tuesday after the losing streak and a 13-15 start cost Jeff Bzdelick his job. The Nuggets didn't look a whole lot different under Cooper—good stretches followed by horrible ones—but certainly had plenty of energy. Playing most of the game without their starters, Denver scrambled on defense and played just well enough on offense to win for just the second time in 10 games. The Nuggets also stayed poised down the stretch despite what Cooper had hoped for with his sidown style.

"It was excited, but I tried not to show the team that I was excited," said Cooper, who played and coached in Los Angeles over parts of three decades. "As a player, I looked to the bench and if Pat Riley was looking a little nervous it effected me on the floor. So I tried to keep my composure so the players don't see me losing my composure."

It worked. Cooper played to make Denver better by focusing on defense—his specialty in 1970s L.A.—and by making sure the offense was put to the test right away against Philadelphia, which had scored 100 points in eight straight games, and Allen Iverson,

who averaged 41 points in his past five. And it didn't help that the Nuggets were without Keron Martin (back) and Greg Buckner (groin), then lost center Marcus Camby, the league's No. 4 shot-blocker, to a strained knee in the first quarter.

SuperSonics 103, Bobcats 97: At Charlotte, N.C., Rashard Lewis scored 27 points and Seattle made 11 three-pointers. In Vladimir Radmanovic added 21 points on 5-for-7 shooting from three-point range and Ray Allen had 18 points for the Sonics. Emeka Okafor led the Bobcats with a career-high 27 points and also had 10 rebounds.

Kings 104, Jazz 102: Chris Webber scored 14 of his 25 points in the third quarter to help the visiting Kings snap a two-game losing streak.

Peja Stojakovic led the Kings with 26 points and Mike Bibby and Brad Miller each added 17. Carlos Boozer led the Jazz with 25 points and 10 rebounds.

Spurs 98, Clippers 79: At Los Angeles, Tim Duncan scored 23 points and Tony Parker added 21 points and 11 assists to help San Antonio win its fifth straight game.

The Southwest Division-leading Spurs, with the best record in franchise history, improved to 25-6 with their 17th victory in 20 games despite the early ejection of coach Gregg Popovich. Corey Maggette and Rick Brunson each had 17 points for the Clippers.

Rockets 105, Bucks 90: Tracy McGrady had 42 points to help the host Rockets rout Milwaukee. McGrady scored 15 of his 42 points in the first half. McGrady scored 15 of his 42 points in the first half. McGrady scored 15 of his 42 points in the first half.

Rockets center Yao Ming missed a game for the first time in his NBA career, sitting out because of a knee injury. Michael Redd led the Bucks with 21 points.

In Thursday's games:

Pacers 96, Nets 83: Jermaine O'Neal scored 31 points to lead visiting Indiana, just hours after a judge ruled that he didn't have to serve the final 10 games of a suspension.

Jeff Foster added 16 points and a season-high 16 rebounds as the Pacers won their third straight game, matching their longest streak since the Nov. 19 break in Detroit that led to multiple suspensions. O'Neal got a 25-game suspension, but last week an arbitrator reduced it to 15 games, allowing him to return to action. U.S. District Judge George B. Daniels upheld that decision in New York about three hours before the Pacers and Nets took the court.

SuperSonics 94, Hawks 79: At Atlanta, Ray Allen scored 20 points. Rashard Lewis added 17 to lead the SuperSonics, who overcame the ejections of Jerome James and Danny Fortson to beat the Hawks.

Official Bob Delaney ejected James after forcing the center his first technical foul with 7:14 left in the third quarter. James, called for an offensive foul, appeared to use an explosive as he looked down at Delaney.

With 6:33 remaining in the fourth quarter, Fortson complained about contact on Seattle's offensive end and was tossed by Delaney.

Heat 89, Pistons 78: Dwyane Wade had 31 points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds to lead Atlanta past host Detroit. Wade helped extend the Heat's franchise-record winning streak to 13 games. Miami, which last lost on Dec. 4, won 14 games in a month for the first time.

Darius Miles had 17 points for Detroit in the Blazers' most lopsided loss of the season.

Spurs 114, Trail Blazers 80: At Port-



Denver Nuggets forward Carmelo Anthony, front, protects the ball as Philadelphia 76ers forward Aton McKie tries for a steal in the first quarter in Denver on Friday.

land, Ore., Tim Duncan had 19 points and nine rebounds and Tony Parker added 18 points to lead San Antonio.

Parker, coming off a season-high 29 points against Phoenix, scored 15 points in the first half as the Spurs won their fourth straight and seventh in eight games.

Darius Miles had 17 points for Portland in the Blazers' most lopsided loss of the season.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	13	12	.520	
Philadelphia	13	14	.484	2 1/2
New Jersey	13	16	.446	5 1/2
Toronto	10	20	.333	9 1/2

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	12	15	.444	7 1/2
Orlando	12	15	.444	7 1/2
Charlotte	7	20	.259	14 1/2
Atlanta	13	19	.406	11 1/2

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	15	13	.538	1/2
Indiana	15	13	.538	1/2
Pistons	9	17	.346	8 1/2
Milwaukee	9	17	.346	8 1/2

Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	25	6	.806	—
Los Angeles	20	11	.645	5 1/2
Houston	15	15	.500	10 1/2
Golden State	12	18	.400	13 1/2
New Orleans	2	26	.077	21 1/2

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	16	7	.692	—
Minnesota	16	11	.593	5 1/2
Utah	13	14	.481	8 1/2
Portland	13	14	.481	8 1/2

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	14	4	.862	—
Sacramento	9	6	.600	6 1/2
Oakland	13	10	.563	3 1/2
L.A. Clippers	13	14	.481	11 1/2
Golden State	10	17	.370	14 1/2

Thursday's games				
Seattle 94, Atlanta 79				
Indiana 96, New Jersey 83				
San Antonio 114, Portland 80				

Friday's games				
Boston 108, Washington 92				
Seattle 103, Charlotte 97				
Memphis 98, L.A. Clippers 79				

Saturday's games				
Charlotte at Miami				
San Antonio at New Orleans				
Memphis at Minnesota				
Portland at Chicago				
Golden State at Portland				
Atlanta at Washington				

Philadelphia at L.A. Clippers				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston at Detroit				
Utah at Houston				
Milwaukee at Dallas				
San Antonio at Sacramento				
Denver at L.A. Lakers				

Friday's games				
Seattle 103, Charlotte 97				
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Nuggets 97, 76ers 92				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	14	12	.538	—
Los Angeles	13	13	.500	1/2
San Antonio	12	14	.462	1 1/2
Golden State	11	15	.423	2 1/2
Portland	10	16	.385	3 1/2

Saturday's games				
Charlotte at Miami				
San Antonio at New Orleans				
Memphis at Minnesota				
Portland at Chicago				
Golden State at Portland				
Atlanta at Washington				

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Atlanta at Washington				

While Brees sits Rivers will play for San Diego

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Two days before he's expected to get the most extensive playing time of his rookie season, San Diego Chargers backup quarterback Philip Rivers had a pretty good reason for missing practice.

Rivers was with his wife, Tiffany, at a hospital on New Year's Eve, awaiting the birth of their second child.

Rivers said the baby was due Friday, two days before the AFC West champion Chargers (11-4) host the Kansas City Chiefs (7-8) in a game that's meaningless except to players like Rivers, who had brief mop-up duty in one game and has yet to throw his first pro pass.

"I don't see any reason why I won't be there," Rivers said by phone. "I expect to play."

Pro Bowl quarterback Drew Brees is expected to sit out as the Chargers try to stay healthy for next week's playoff game. If Brees sits, 42-year-old Doug Flutie will start and Rivers will play at some point.

Coach Marty Schottenheimer, who'd like the Chargers to win even with backups playing, remained calm.

"The likelihood is that Drew will not play," Schottenheimer said. "But don't expect that in granite."

Rivers has taken just six snaps this season, all at the end of the fourth quarter of a 26-point win over New Orleans on Nov. 7. He handed off three times, then took a knee three times.

"I suppose there's a certain amount of curiosity on the part of all of us" to see Rivers play, Schottenheimer said.

Flutie also has played just once this season, after Brees sustained a concussion during the second half of a home loss to the New York Jets on Sept. 19.

"I'm excited to see him get another shot," Flutie said. "I was like a little kid when I got in the Jets game. I got to play and have fun and you feel like you're part of a team and earn your keep. It gives Drew a little bit of a break."

Rivers has been the second-string quarterback most of the season and Flutie has been No. 3, but they're doing check kicking order for the playoffs.

Pro Bowl running back LaDainian Tomlinson is expected to play "very limited, if at all," Schottenheimer said.

Tomlinson has scored a rushing touchdown in 12 straight games, an NFL season record. The overall NFL record is 13, shared by John Riggins and George Rogers, who both did it while playing with the Washington Redskins. Riggins did it in 1982-83 and Rogers in 1985-86.

Brees has "gut feeling" he won't be smothered for Redskins next season

ASHBURN, Va. — Fred Smoot's "gut feeling" no longer has him optimistic about returning to the Washington Redskins next year.

"I want to be here bad," Smoot said Thursday. "It's not about me wanting to be here. It's about them wanting me to be here."

Smoot's contract expires at the end of the season. He recently had expressed optimism that he would stay with the Redskins, with negotiations resulting in a new deal possibly before the final game this weekend.

Asked Thursday if he was still optimistic, Smoot said, "I can't say that I am."

"Just say a gut feeling," he added.

When Joe Gibbs said he wants Smoot to return, despite the impasse in talks.

"We're going to make every effort we can to sign him," Gibbs said. "We got going hard on it in the middle of the year, and it kind of reached a point where it was a stalemate, but we're going to do everything we can to try and sign him."

"We've offered Fred to be a top-ten paid cornerback in the NFL. We remain optimistic in getting the



Redskins cornerback Fred Smoot (21), attempting to tackle Cowboys wide receiver Keyshawn Johnson, is in the final days of a four-year, \$2.6 million contract.

deal done," said Vinnie Cerrato, vice president for football operations.

Smoot could become the second high-profile cornerback to leave the Redskins in as many seasons. Perennial Pro Bowl player Champ Bailey was traded to Denver in March after failed and often contentious contract negotiations.

Smoot and Bailey remain close friends and talk frequently. Smoot said Bailey has been giving him advice about how to handle contract negotiations and how to play the free agent market if no deal is reached.

"It's never the player," Smoot said. "It's all about the front office — and do they want me here. Champ helped me a lot to get through this year, the mental part of it."

If Smoot doesn't return, his last game with the Redskins was Sunday's 14-10 loss to the Dallas Cowboys. Smoot had to spend the night in a Dallas hospital after the game with nausea and a bruised kidney from a hit by teammate Sean Taylor. Smoot, carrying several bottles of medicine in his hand, said he won't be able to play in this week's season finale against Minnesota.

Ferguson targets return for playoffs

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Wide receiver Robert Ferguson says he hopes to see action in the playoffs.

Ferguson continues his recuperation from a clothesline hit Dec. 19 that temporarily paralyzed his legs and earned Jacksonville's Donovan Darius a \$75,000 fine. He says Thursday he's still suffering from headaches and lingering weakness on one side of his body in the aftermath of the hit by Darius.

But as he spoke with reporters at Packers headquarters for the first time since the injury, he couldn't help quipping that his return might come as soon as Sunday, when the Packers end the regular season in Chicago.

"I'm trying to play Sunday against the Bears," Ferguson said with a straight face more than once.

Coach Mike Sherman ruled that out.

Still, there's a chance the fourth-year veteran could be back on the practice field next week and possibly play in Green Bay's first-round game in the NFC playoffs.

"I think it's a realistic goal right now," Ferguson said. "I think it's probably about a 75 percent, 80 percent chance that I could practice next week."

Kitna to start at QB for Bengals

CINCINNATI — With Carson Palmer still nursing a late knee injury, Jon Kitna will make his third consecutive start at quarterback for the Bengals on Sunday at Philadelphia.

Palmer has been lobbying to return since he left the Dec. 12 game at New England with a sprained left knee ligament.

Browns expect QB Holcomb to start

BEREA, Ohio — Cleveland quarterback Kelly Holcomb will likely start against the Houston Texans in the Browns' season finale Sunday.

Holcomb tied a franchise record with five touchdown passes in his last start, a 58-48 loss at Cincinnati on Nov. 28, but sustained cracked ribs. Rookie Luke McCown started the past four weeks.

"We're going to go with a veteran guy, go with Kelly and see if he can give us a lift and help us try to win the game," interim coach Terry Robiskie said.

Point spreads not in line with reality

By DAVE GOLDBERG

The Associated Press

When the line for Denver's home game against Indianapolis came out Sunday night, the Broncos were 5½-point favorites, a surprise considering the Colts are 12-3.

By Tuesday, Denver was an 8½-point favorite.

Anyone who watched the Rams beat the Eagles' junior varsity on Monday night knows exactly what is going on.

The Broncos (9-6) need to beat the Colts to make the playoffs.

The Colts need nothing except to stay healthy. They are locked in as the third-seeded team in the AFC and might play the Broncos again a week later in Indianapolis.

So the line reflects the incentive factor, as it does in a number of games in the final weekend of the NFL regular season.

"There are a lot of factors involved in how much they'll play or how long," Colts coach Tony Dungy says, referring to his starters, including Peyton Manning, who broke Dan Marino's record for touchdown passes in a season last week.

Dungy is a classy guy, but like all coaches of teams that have clinched all they can clinch, he has to think "me first." Or at least "us first."

So maybe Manning will play long enough to throw his 50th touchdown pass. More likely he won't. He has his record; his top three wide receivers each has 1,000 yards; and the Colts prefer to keep everyone healthy for the playoffs.

BRONCOS, 27-6

Pittsburgh (3-9) at Buffalo: Another glorified exhibition, except that Buffalo needs to win. Real line would probably favor the Steelers by 3 to 6. ... **BILLS, 20-6.**

Kansas City (minus 3) at San Diego: A six-point swing here; the Chargers originally were favored by 3. Some theory ... **CHIEFS, 32-16.**

New York Jets (minus 3) at St.

NFL picks

Louis: Surprise! A game that means something to both teams. ... **JETS, 24-20.**

New Orleans (plus 7) at Carolina: Ditto. ... **PANTHERS, 24-20.**

Minnesota (minus 4) at Washington: The Vikings need it, but the Redskins are out of it. But Washington will play hard. ... **REDSKINS, 18-17.**

San Francisco (plus 14) at New England: The Patriots could win. Troy Brown at QB and win. Rodney Davey is more likely. ... **PATRIOTS, 31-3.**

Cincinnati (minus 3) at Philadelphia: Marvin Lewis gets his second straight 8-8 season. ... **BENGALS, 24-7.**

Miami (plus 11) at Baltimore: Jim Bates saved what was left of the Redskins' season. He'll keep his finale close. ... **RAVENS, 17-13.**

Dallas (plus 2½) at New York Giants: Eli finally gets over the top. ... **GIANTS, 20-19.**

Green Bay (plus 3) at Chicago: Another line-flipper: Packers were favored by 2 at the start. Favre will start to keep streak, but ... **BEARS, 20-16.**

Jacksonville (off) at Oakland: Jaguars are still alive but realistically blew a playoff berth last week. ... **JAGUARS, 21-20.**

Tampa Bay (plus 3) at Arizona: And flip again — Bucs were favored by 2. ... **CARDINALS, 19-14.**

Cleveland (plus 10½) at Houston: Texans have their first .500 season on the line. ... **TEXANS, 24-16.**

Atlanta (plus 5½) at Seattle: Michael Vick practiced this week. Will he play? Seattle tries to clinch the West. ... **SEAHAWKS, 22-16.**

Detroit (minus 3) at Tennessee: The Titans have few healthy bodies. ... **LIONS, 31-23.**

Last week: 7-8-1 spread, 10-6 (straight up).

Season: 104-115-5 (spread), 147-77 (straight up)

Funeral services held for NFL great R. White

The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Flowers in the green and yellow of the Green Bay Packers and portraits of Reggie White flanked the NFL great's coffin during a private church funeral Thursday.

Green Bay quarterback Brett Favre, a longtime teammate of White, used a pallbearer and led a contingent of about 50 members of the Packers organization at the University Park Baptist Church.

Former NFL player Eugene Robinson, with the Packers in 1996-97 and a teammate of White when both played with the Carolina Panthers in 2000, said the service was a mix of sadness and humor.

White played for the Packers from 1993-98 and helped Green Bay to a Super Bowl title in a victory over New England after the 1996 season. Green Bay lost to Denver in the championship game the following season.

"He's a huge part of our tradition," Packers President Bob Harlan said. "For us to come here and salute him, I hope it meant something to the family. It must be a great deal to us."

The service included a quotation from former Packers coach Vince Lombardi that read, "The quality of a man's life is in direct proportion to his commitment to excellence whatever his chosen field or endeavor."

White also played for Philadelphia from 1985-92.

SPORTS



Regular-season finales
serve up some out-of-line
favorites, Page 43

Navy shines in Emerald Bowl

Mids seal first
10-win season
since 1905 by
routing Lobos

By STEVE FAINARU
The Washington Post

SAN FRANCISCO — Navy football's first 10-win season in 99 years ended with quarterback Aaron Polanco leading an astonishing 26-play drive across a wet field against one of the nation's toughest defenses.

The drive consumed 14 minutes, 26 seconds — nearly an entire quarter — and traveled 94 yards into the wind before Geoff Blumenfeld kicked a 22-yard field goal, completing Navy's 34-19 victory over New Mexico Thursday in the third Emerald Bowl.

The long march provided a grinding summary not only of how Navy won its first bowl game since 1996, but also how it turned around its program under coach Paul Johnson, who took over in 2002 after the Midshipmen went 1-20 the previous two seasons.

During this 10-2 season, the best since Navy went 10-1-1 in 1905, Johnson relied heavily on the previously untested Polanco, a quantitative economics major from Wimberly, Texas, who was born so tiny (2 pounds) in 1983 he was simultaneously baptized and given his last rites.

Now an unimposing 6-feet, 208 pounds, Polanco was all over the field Thursday, diving into puddle-filled end zones, hurdling defenders, catching halfback passes. The game's most valuable offensive player ran for three touchdowns and gained 136 yards on 26 carries. He threw for another touchdown, a 61-yard strike to



Navy quarterback Aaron Polanco, jumping over New Mexico's Gabriel Fulbright, ran for three touchdowns and threw for another to lead the Midshipmen to a 34-19 victory over New Mexico in the Emerald Bowl on Thursday. Polanco, a senior, ran for 136 yards and even caught two passes for 23 yards.

*"I think this will
go down in the
annals as one
of the special
Navy teams."*

Paul Johnson
Navy coach

wide receiver Corey Dryden that was Navy's longest of the season. He also caught two passes from slotback Frank Davis; one set up a touchdown and the other extended the long fourth-quarter march.

"I think this will go down in the annals as one of the special Navy teams," said Johnson, who has led the Middies to an 18-7 record the past two years.

Navy was the second-least penalized team in the nation this season and the third-best rushing team after leading the nation in rushing last year.

Asked about his multi-faceted



Linebacker Bobby McClarin (51) jars the ball loose from New Mexico quarterback Kole McKamney, right. Navy's defense forced three turnovers and shut out the Lobos in the second half.

AP

performance, Polanco shrugged, "Who knew?"

The victory carried its own sobering reality for Navy. A team that finished 10-2 will lose 16 senior starters and 36 seniors.

Upon graduation, each player will begin mandatory military service and possible tours in Iraq, in

particular those players who have selected service in the U.S. Marine Corps.

The Marines have operational responsibility for some of the most dangerous regions in Iraq, including Anbar province, which contains Fallujah, and the area of

SEE NAVY ON PAGE 38



**No. 7 Louisville
storms back to
beat 10th-ranked
Boise State; bowl
games roundup**

Pages 38, 39, 40



**Diamondbacks,
Yankees reach
another tentative
agreement in
Johnson saga**

Page 37



**Beating N.C. State
rekindles
fond memories
for St. John's**

Page 41



AP

Navy celebrates its first postseason victory since the 1996 Aloha Bowl. The Midshipmen sealed the victory with a 14-minute, 26-second drive that ended with a field goal late in the fourth quarter.

